

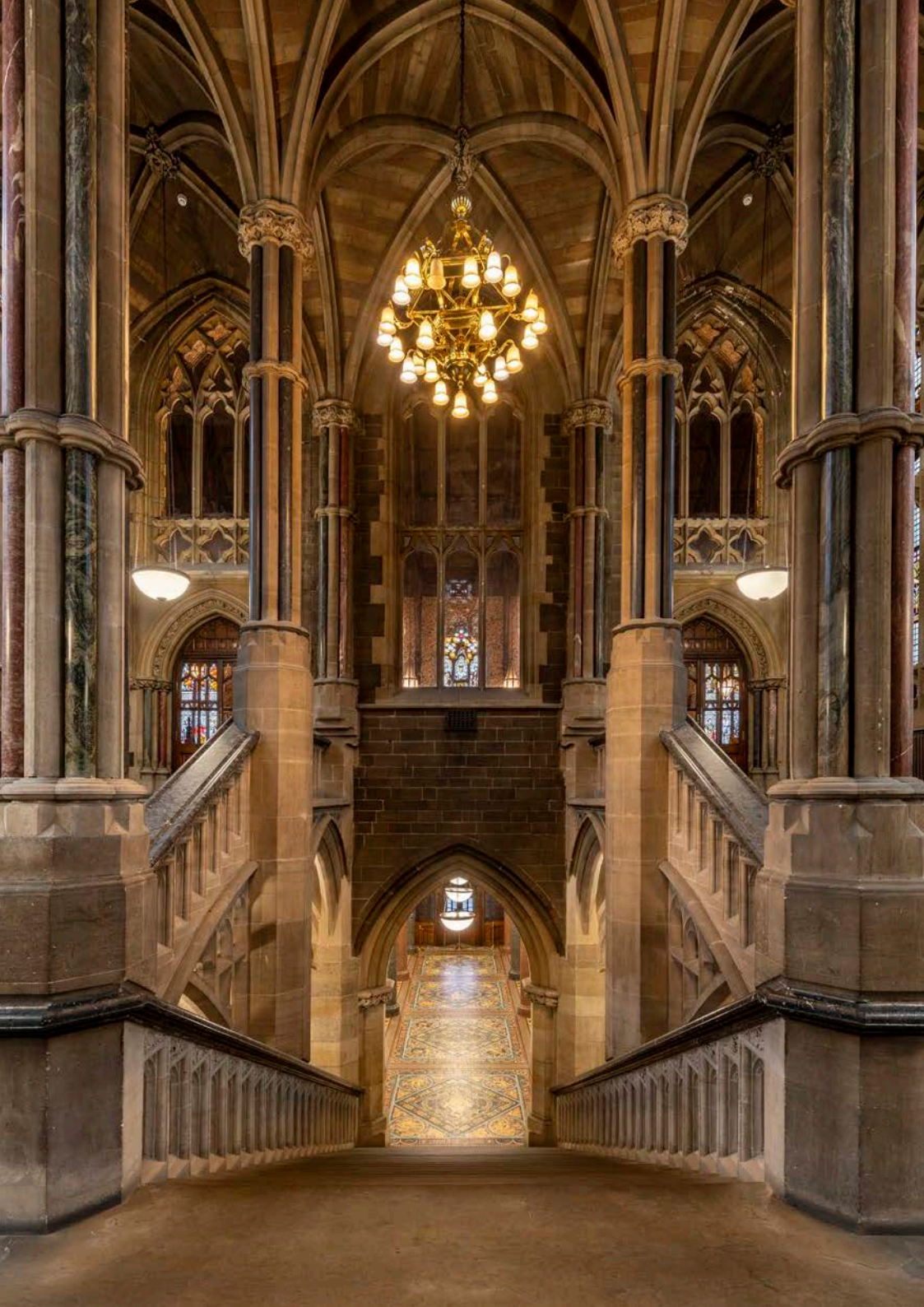
A photograph of Rochdale Town Hall, a large Gothic Revival building with a prominent clock tower on the left. The building features intricate stonework, multiple levels of arched windows, and a central spire. The foreground shows a street with parked cars and a clear blue sky.

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Rochdale Town Hall - Phase 3 Works

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

For Rochdale Development Agency



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1.0 Summery of Heritage, Design and Access Statement

1.0 Summary of Heritage, Design and Access Statement

1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates were appointed in February 2019 to continue providing lead consultant and conservation architect services for Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) at Rochdale Town Hall following the successful outcome of the Heritage Fund stage 1 bid.

The development of the building and its social, architectural and artistic context was fully researched from the beginning of the project. A full assessment of significance and analysis of the building and its contents culminated in the *Rochdale Town Hall Conservation Management Plan*, Donald Insall Associates, 2019 (CMP). This plan has underpinned the development of the brief and the scheme. It summarises the significance of the building, the potential threats to that significance and opportunities to make improvements to its condition and long-term sustainability; it also provides guidance on its conservation and management within an accompanying Gazetteer.

Rochdale Town Hall is owned and managed by Rochdale Borough Council. Many of the administrative functions had however relocated to the new offices at Number One Riverside, and therefore the Town Hall's function as council offices had almost ceased. Some areas were underused and had reverted to storage, whilst others were crowded with surplus office furniture and equipment. There were numerous instances where the current use or management of rooms affected the significance of the building, or where aspects of the building were not well-suited to their current use. Rochdale Borough Council's challenge is to maintain and manage the building so that it meets public

expectations for a civic and community building and complies with current legislation within a constrained budget, whilst protecting its exceptional significance.

Following the refinement of the proposals and commissioning of specialist surveys and opening up works, the project was divided into three phases of work:

- Phase 1: the primary objective of Phase 1 proposals was enabling works to reduce risks to the Phase 2 NLHF works and largely comprised strip-out works, structural openings and preparatory works funded by RBC: completed
- Phase 2: the main body of the NLHF works for the repair and restoration of the Town Hall including surrounding terracing: nearing completion
- Phase 3: concerning the west wing. Repair, restoration and alteration of circulation space including restoration of the Council Chamber.

The proposals have been developed with our client Rochdale Development Agency and the project consultant team, along with specialist surveyors and contractors. Planning permission and listed building consent are now sought for Phase 3 of the proposed works which are described in detail in the application drawings and this Heritage, Design and Access Statement.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report has been drafted as a continuation of the CMP, the key principles of which are summarised in the Conservation Philosophy which is contained at Section 3 of this report. It is underpinned by the comprehensive illustrated historic background, detailed building analysis and room-by-room gazetteer contained within the CMP and should be read in conjunction with that document - the Assessment of Significance is also provided at Section 2. This understanding has informed the development of proposals for change to the building which are outlined in Section 4. Matters relating to access, sustainability, security, and highways are included in Section 5 and Section 6 provides a justification of the scheme according to the relevant planning policy and guidance.

1.3 The Building, its Legal Status and Policy Context

Rochdale Town Hall is a Grade I listed building located in the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area (designated in 1980 and extended in 2011) in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. It is in the setting of a number of nationally significant designated heritage assets. Directly opposite the Town Hall lies the Cenotaph (Grade I) and the old Post Office (Grade II); to the rear, St Chads Church (Grade II*) sits at the top of the hill with Broadfield Park and Slopes (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) extending between. The recently listed Rochdale Bridge (Grade II) forms part of the NLHF funded 'Revealing the Roch' scheme. The site also lies within the Historic England designated 'Heritage Action Zone' – a 5 year programme of heritage-led regeneration.

The statutory list description of the listed building is included in Appendix I and a summary of guidance on the conservation area provided by the local planning authority is in Appendix II, along with extracts from the relevant legislation and planning policy documents.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have *'special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'* and, in respect of conservation areas, that *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plans applicable to the Site are the Rochdale Core Strategy 2012–2028 (adopted 2016) and retained policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2006). These require that proposed works conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets including consideration of their wider settings.

The courts have held that following the approach set out in the policies on the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 will effectively result in a decision-maker complying with its statutory duties. The Framework forms a material consideration for the purposes of section 38(6).

At the heart of the Framework is *'a presumption in favour of sustainable development'* and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are *'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'*. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

The Framework, in paragraph 194, states that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Section 2 of this report – the assessment of significance – meets this requirement and is based on the research and site surveys undertaken as part of the CMP, which are of a sufficient level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

The Framework also, in paragraph 199, requires 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.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 200 that:

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.

Section 7 of this report will, when the proposals are finalised, provide this clear and convincing justification.

The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset', the Framework states, in paragraph 201, that:

...local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in paragraph 202, that:

...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 206 states that:

Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Concerning conservation areas it states, in paragraph 207, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area [...] will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive

contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or [...] should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area [...] as a whole.

1.3 Summary of Project Brief

A continuation of the Phase 1 and 2 works already consented and underway on site, Phase 3 looks to implement a scheme of works for the west wing of the Town Hall incorporating the following:

- Conservation and modernisation of the Council Chambers
- A new balcony access to the Porte Cochère
- Shell and core repair to the Fire Station
- Specialist repair and restoration of decorative interiors
- Improved circulation and accessibility
- New services including lift, plant and equipment
- New facilities including toilets, storage and associated works

The proposals have been carefully developed to respond appropriately to the significance of the listed building – guided by the key objective of preserving its exceptional historic and architectural interest, with proposals for change guided by an overarching Conservation Philosophy. The majority of change is focussed in areas of lower significance together with repairing and restoring areas of higher significance in accordance with the policies outlined

in the accompanying Conservation Management Plan (CMP), and centred on four key strands of the adopted philosophy.

This **Heritage, Design and Access Statement** and suite of supporting documents have been prepared to support the applications for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent for the **Phase 3** proposals - which as outlined above form part of the wider, phased refurbishment of Rochdale Town Hall. A series of public realm works, within the setting of the Town Hall are being carefully implemented and developed, but do not form part of this application.



2.0 Assessment of Significance

2.0 Assessment of Significance

2.1 Introduction

This assessment responds to the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to 'recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. The NPPF defines significance as:

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological (potential to yield evidence about the past), architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.

Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* of 2008 sets out current good practice for assessing the significance of historic buildings in England and is derived from the 1979 Burra Charter. It states that the following values should be considered in order to fully understand the significance of a place:

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

This significance of a heritage asset should also be considered spatially, as well as conceptually, because significance is not always manifest in equal measure in all parts of a building or place. In some situations, for example, all four categories of heritage values are present; in others, fewer; in some places the heritage values might even be in conflict.

A hierarchy of significance is an essential tool for managing change. Areas of the highest or high significance are most sensitive to change; areas of medium and low significance are correspondingly more adaptable. Negative elements, and to a lesser extent areas of medium or low significance, also provide the clearest opportunities for change.

Highest – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

Negative – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

2.2 Statement of Significance

The following assessment was made prior to the commencement of Phase 1 and Phase 2 works on site therefore it should be noted that some elements, particularly those identified as detracting from the significance of the Town Hall, will change upon the completion of the Phase 2 works. The Phase 3 works are however focused on the west wing, which was excluded from Phase 1 and 2, and therefore this will not affect the assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance of those parts.

Rochdale Town Hall is a Grade I listed building of exceptional interest, its dramatic Gothic exterior and jewel-like interior are in harmony and together they exemplify not only the apex of High Victorian design and suggest the beginning of the Aesthetic movement, but also represent Rochdale's specific position on trade and politics and the building is a symbol of civic pride and as such is of national significance.

The Town Hall was designed by William Crossland, a prominent Victorian architect, and is of the highest significance in terms of its historic value as one of the finest examples of a Victorian town hall nationally. As well as being an outstanding example of the Gothic Revival, it also includes early examples of Aesthetic Movement design, then a very new movement in art.

Its original form as designed is little altered with the exception of the later tower, itself a fine example of design by Waterhouse, and the north front and tower are of the highest architectural significance. This is derived through the aesthetic value of its exterior and for the particularly outstanding decorative design of the interior. Externally, Crossland utilised the form of the architecture and a hierarchy of decorative detail to express separate internal functions and create a unified interior and exterior scheme, with stone carvings and stained glass of the highest quality embellishing the building, with symbolic sculpture and motifs by the leading craftsmen of their trade.

Internally the surviving rooms with intact schemes are probably unmatched as examples of Victorian polychrome decorated interiors, with one of the most elaborate examples of pictorial and heraldic decoration of this era. The building has been in continuous public use for over 140 years and has a high evidential

value founded in several major phases of alteration undertaken to reflect the changing aspirations and priorities of the Council; the layers of paint and other finishes in the decorative scheme hold evidence for the original appearance and composition of paint colours and are part of the building's significance. Adaptations undertaken in the 1970s and 1990s are of low value and detract from the significance of the building.

A socially and culturally radical building, the Town Hall is regarded as a symbol of civic pride and identity in Rochdale. It has communal value for its presence in the town centre, as a focus of significant events and for the interior decoration illustrating the balance between radical politics, Victorian trade and a claim on tradition which Rochdale's entrepreneurs and politicians sought - rooted in Rochdale's heritage. The theme of interior decoration showing industrial processes and working people are extremely rare within Victorian fine art.

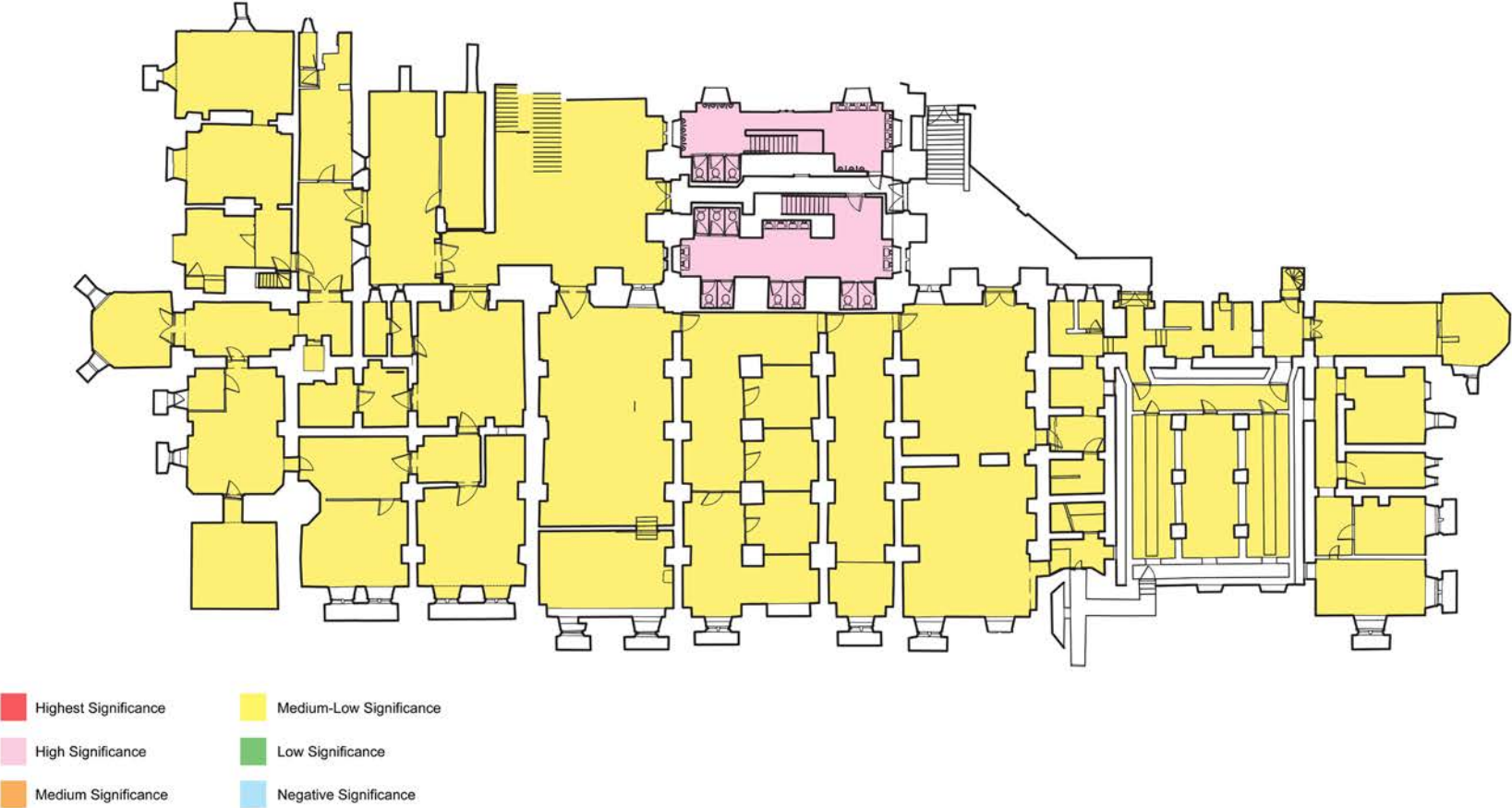
The Town Hall is the most significant building in the conservation area; lying on an island site it forms a major landmark on the Esplanade and dominates the town centre. It forms part of an attractive group of civic and community buildings that include St Chad's Church and the Post Office set in a designed landscape that was developed in stages between the late 19th century and the mid-20th century and recently enhanced through the reopening of the River Roch.

Views from the west along the Esplanade, from Park Slopes and from Memorial Gardens are of particular significance; whilst car parking, traffic and associated highway clutter detract from the Town Hall's wider landscaped setting.

Basement

NOTES

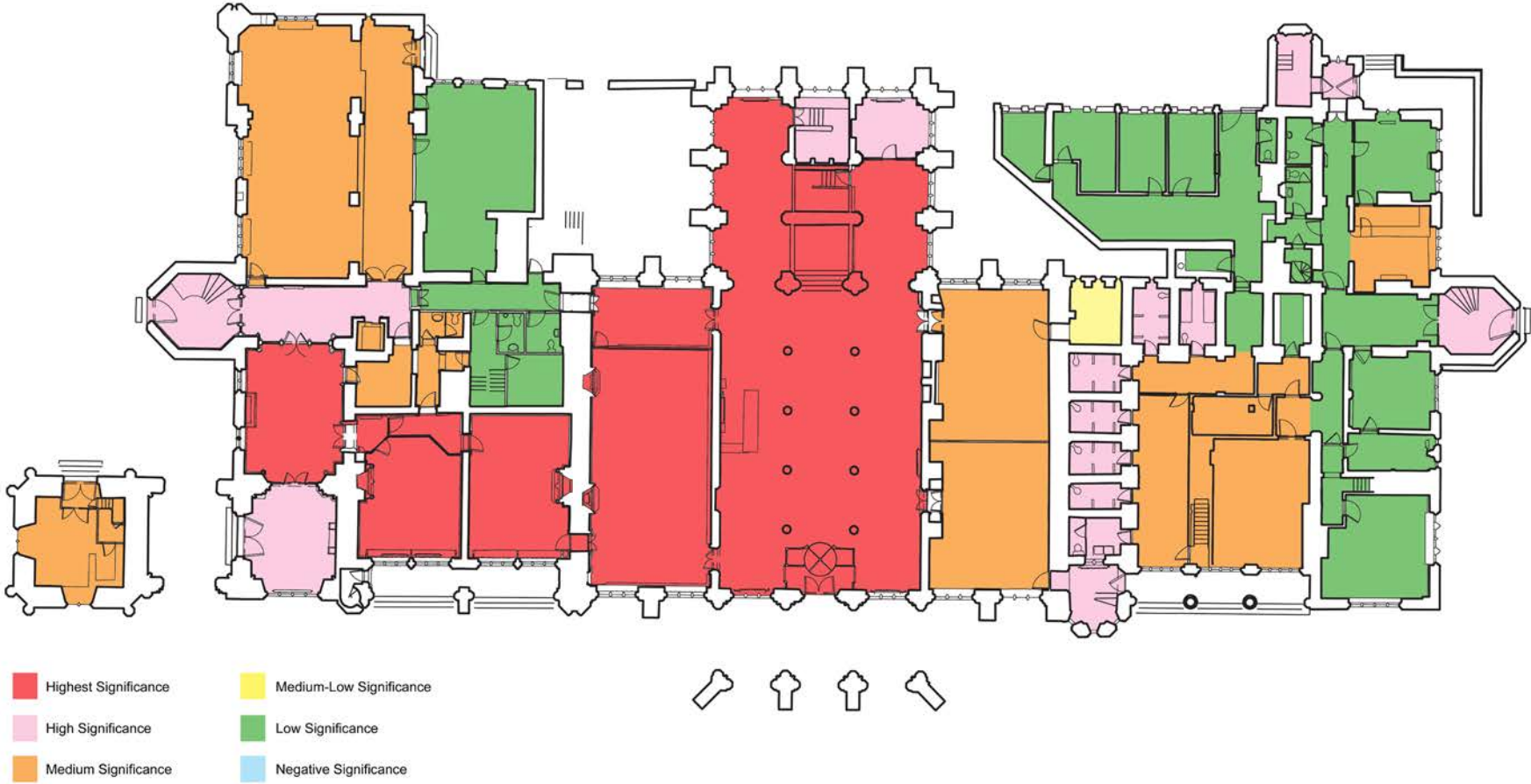
The existing building measured survey has been undertaken by Salford Archaeology and all reference to this information is referenced directly from the associated drawings.



Ground Floor

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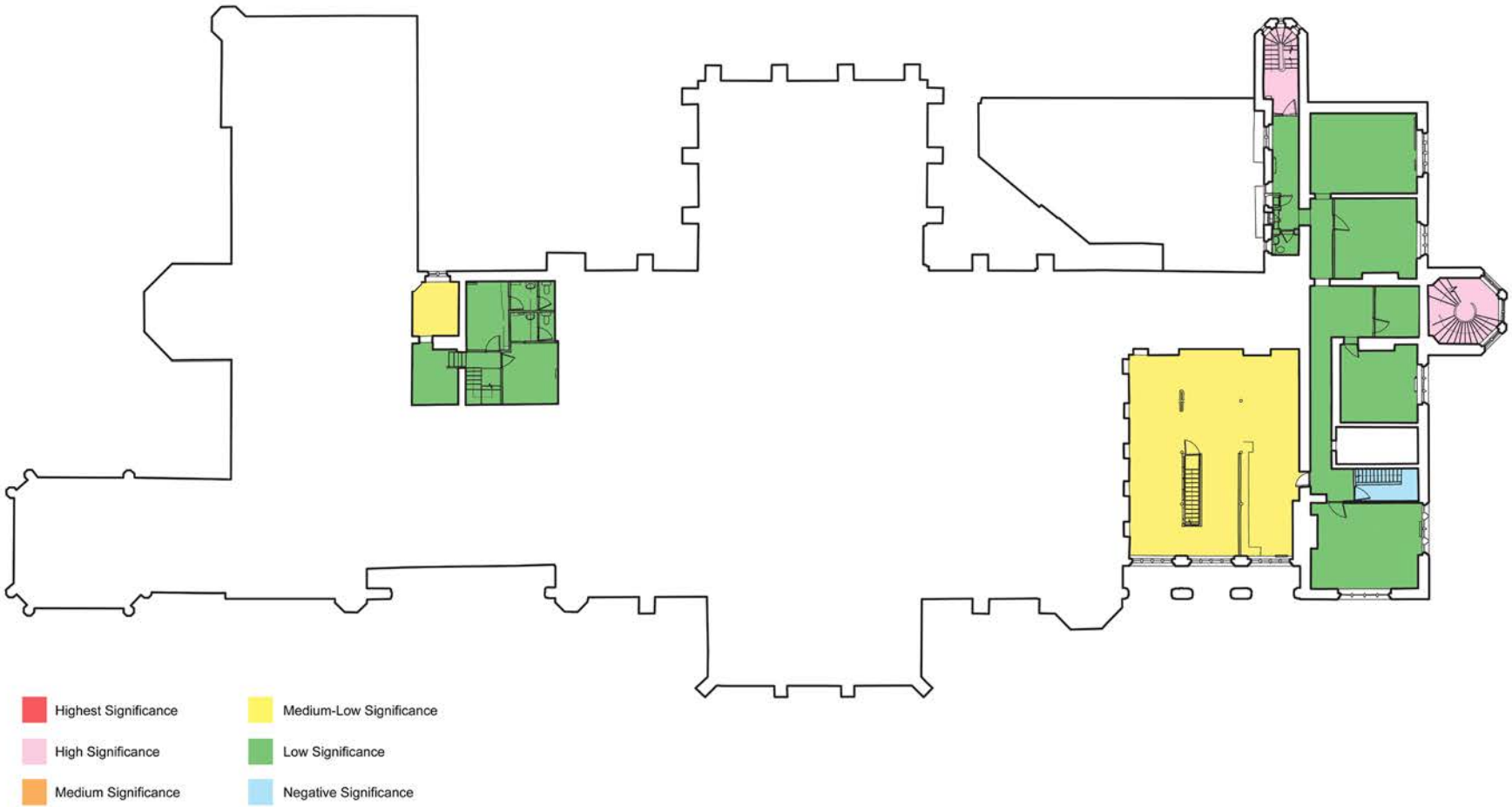
The existing building measured survey has been undertaken by Salford Archaeology and all reference to this information is referenced directly from the associated drawings.



Mezzanine

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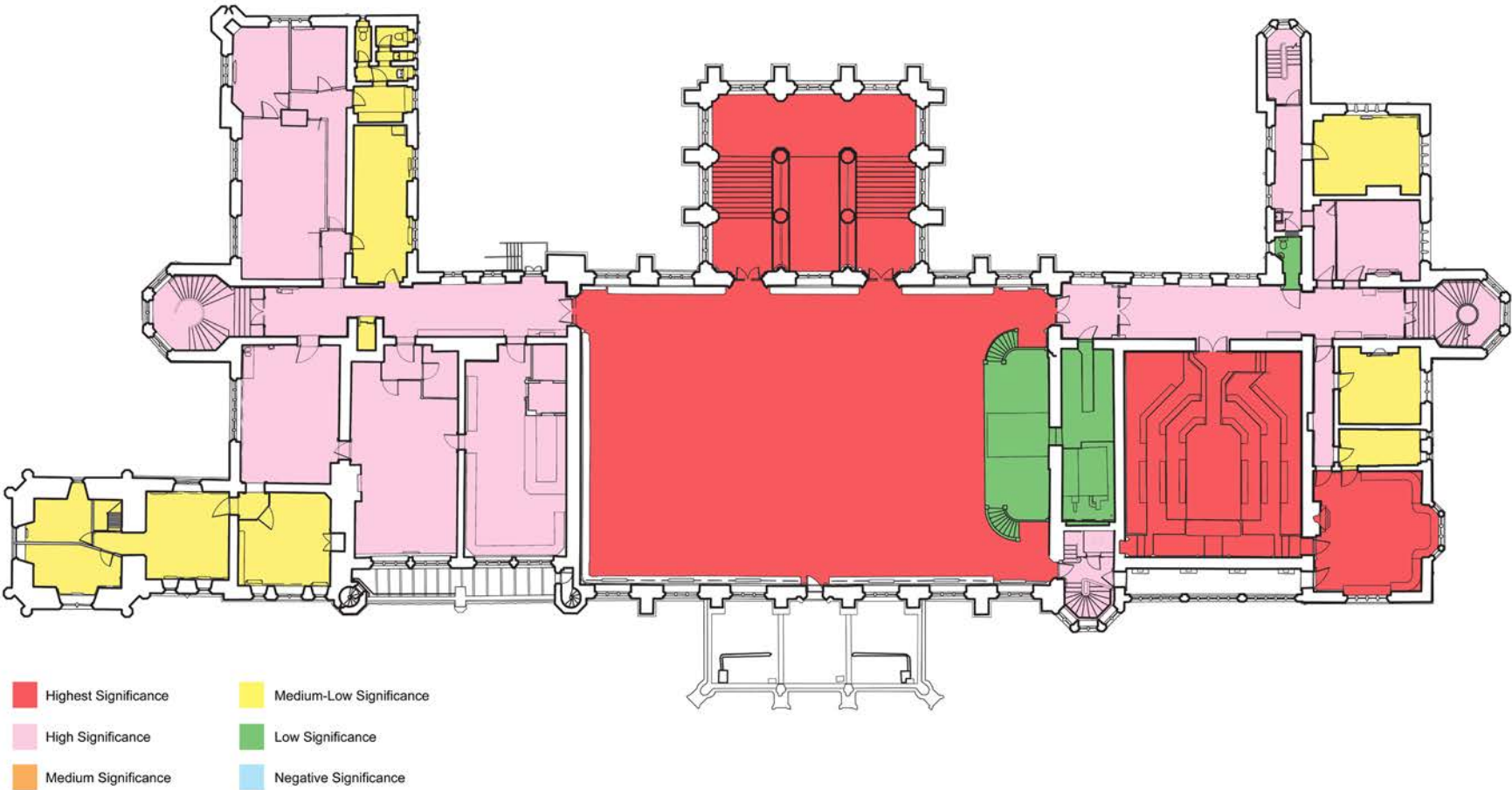
The existing building measured survey has been undertaken by Salford Archaeology and all reference to this information is referenced directly from the associated drawings.



First Floor

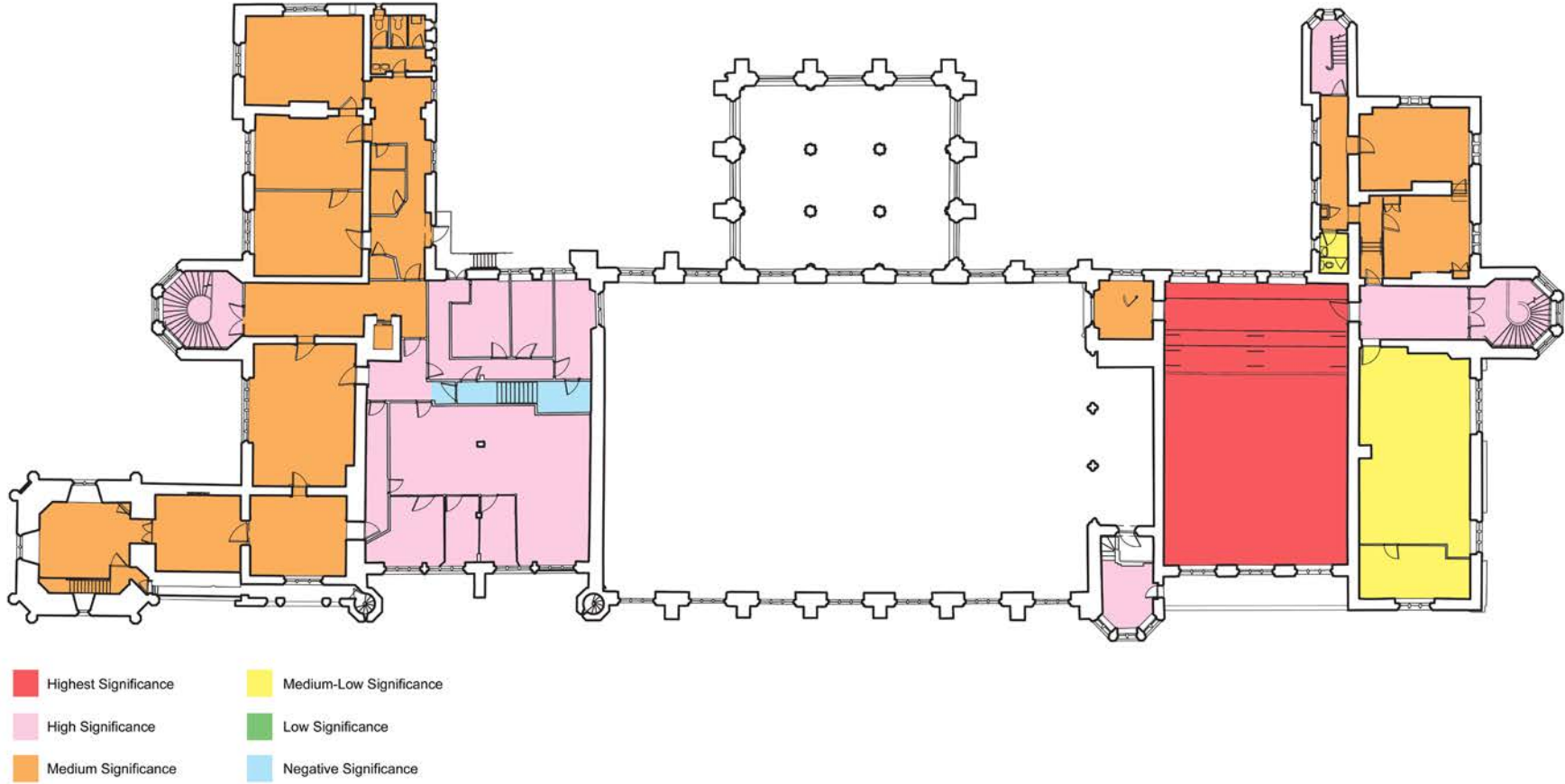
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The existing building measured survey has been undertaken by Salford Archaeology and all reference to this information is referenced directly from the associated drawings.

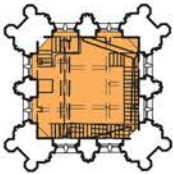


Second Floor

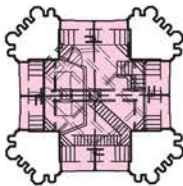
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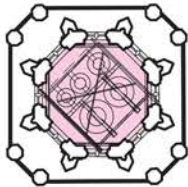
Third Floor & High Tower



Fourth Floor Plan

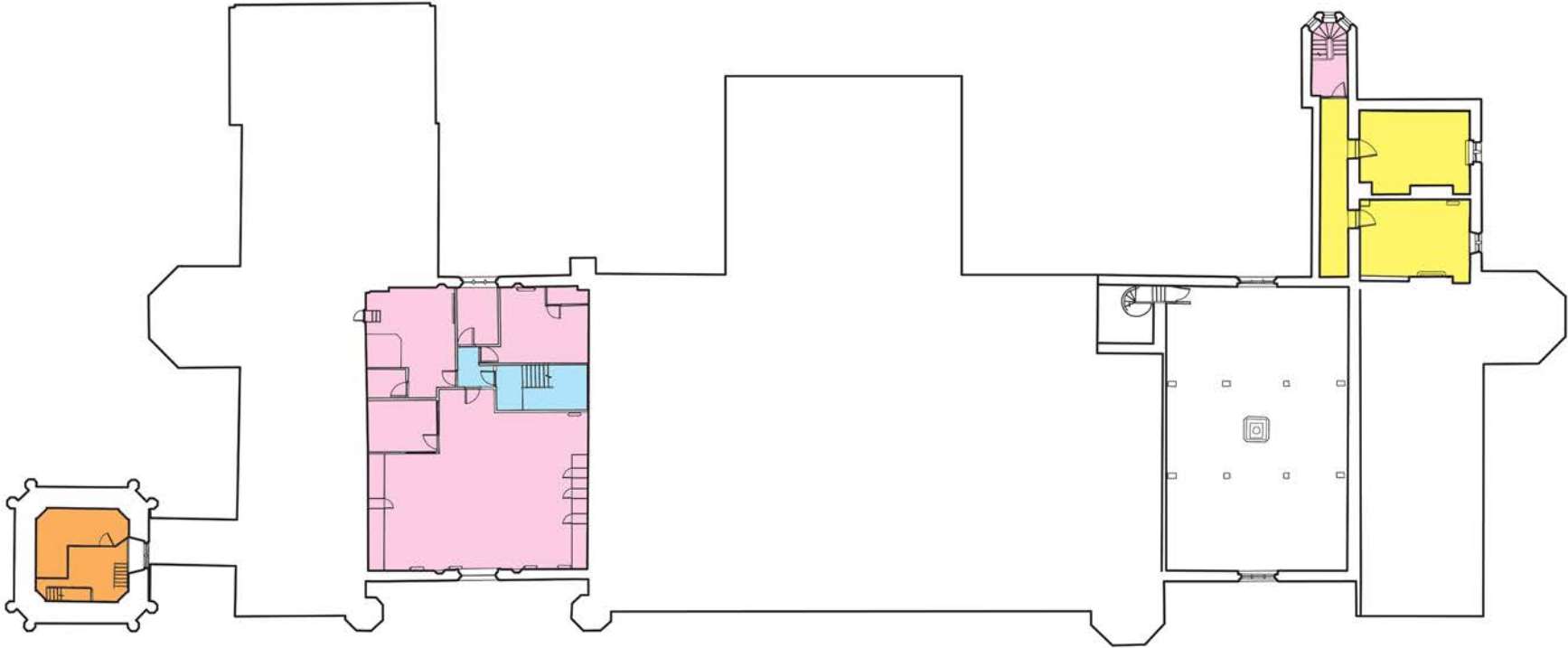


Clock Chamber



Bell Chamber

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <div></div> Highest Significance | <div></div> Medium-Low Significance |
| <div></div> High Significance | <div></div> Low Significance |
| <div></div> Medium Significance | <div></div> Negative Significance |



2.3 Detailed Assessment of Significance

2.3.1 Significance: Setting

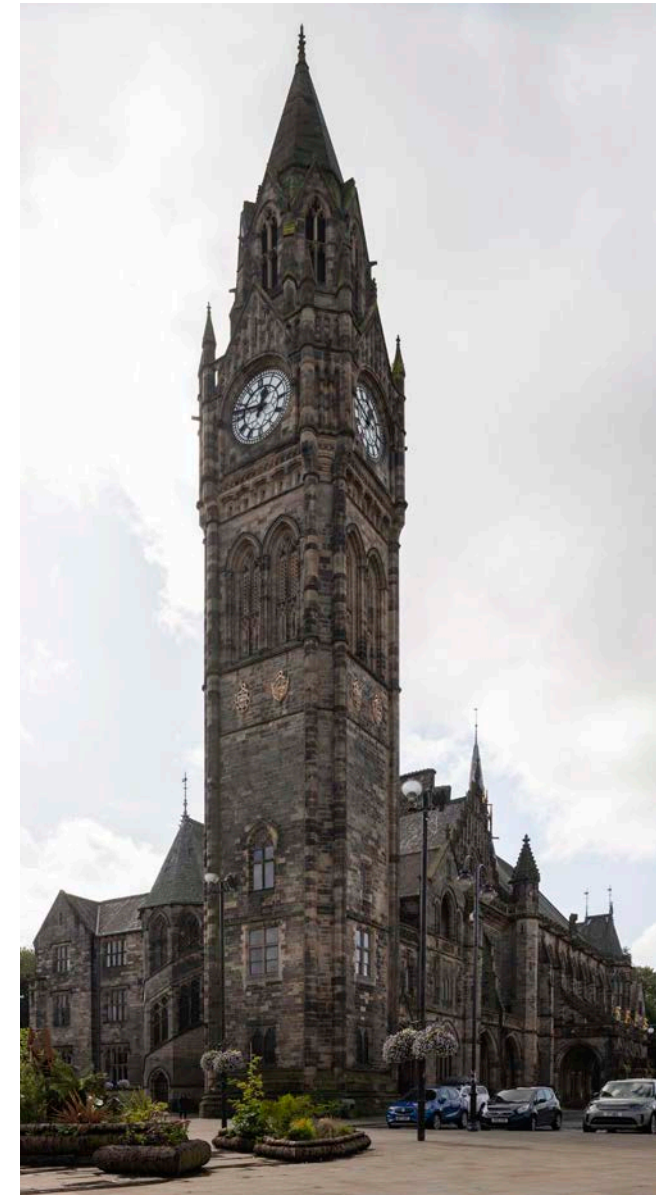
The Town Hall stands on an island site and forms the major landmark on the Esplanade and within the town centre. The site was cleared to allow for its construction and as a consequence the Town Hall does not have a strong relationship with the surrounding historic street pattern which was altered to accommodate it. Its immediate setting however was also remodelled to designs by Crossland to create a dignified civic setting for the building. To the north a new road edged with a new riverside parapet was laid out whilst to the south, Park Slopes was created with an informal park for recreation; both schemes were finished by 1870 in time for the opening of the Town Hall. The Town Hall Square and Memorial Gardens both formed later additions to its setting, the former altered by modern car parking. Views from the west along the Esplanade, from Park Slopes and from the Memorial Gardens are of particular significance. The existence of such an unusually generous space around the Town Hall is the result of separate phases of investment by the Corporation over a period of over 70 years, to create a landscape setting for their Town Hall. Car parking, traffic and associated highway clutter added since the mid-20th century however detracts from the overall civic quality of its setting.

2.3.2 Significance: External Fabric

The exterior architecture of the Town Hall is of the highest significance as an example of a Town Hall designed in the Gothic Revival architectural style, with separate functions expressed in the form of the architecture and a hierarchy of decorative detail used to clearly express the most important areas and functions. Crossland used the country's best stone carvers and stained glass artists to embellish the building with individually created, highest quality symbolic sculpture and motifs. The principal north façade and tower are of the highest significance whilst the rear elevation and south wings were deliberately treated more plainly, creating a clear contrast between these functional areas and the imposing public frontage - these are still of high significance. Minor late-20th century alterations to the south-east elevation have had a minor impact on the appearance of this façade; however overall the exterior is virtually unaltered and remains as designed by Crossland, with the later tower by Waterhouse [Plates 2.1 and 2.2].



2.1 The north front (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.2 Waterhouse's tower, viewed from the north-east (Damian Griffiths 2019)

2.3.3 Significance: Interior and Decorative Scheme

The interior as a whole is considered to be of high significance. The Gazetteer contained within the CMP sets out the relative significance of different spaces, also shown on the accompany Significance Plans. The original internal structure and plan form is largely intact; the planning of the building was not particularly innovative at the time it was built, but reflected divisions between different historic functions of the Council at that time. Some aspects of circulation did not work well from the beginning, and changes were made incrementally to address this as municipal functions evolved within the Council.

Rooms were designed in a hierarchy so that at the lower end of the scale, functional offices and service rooms were plainly finished; these are of lower significance than the high status reception and civic rooms. The plan form has been altered in some areas making the historic layout less legible. Where spatial quality and the integrity of rooms have been compromised by these changes, significance is lower, for example in the former police parade ground (G15a-g). In some altered areas, such as in Committee Room 3 (G2b), the later changes could easily be reversed and the overall high decorative quality of the room means that it is still of the highest significance. Where the most important rooms have survived intact, these are of highest significance.

The decorative design of the high status rooms in the interior is of the highest significance; Rochdale has one of the most elaborate programmes of pictorial and heraldic decoration of all Victorian town halls. It is of the highest significance in the context of comparable schemes, such as Manchester Town Hall.

The subject matter depicting modern tradesmen and textile machinery expresses pride in contemporary industrial processes is unique to Rochdale Town Hall, not occurring elsewhere in Victorian art. This is highly significant in the context of Victorian art and also in a social history and architectural context. In contrast, depictions of birds, flowers and animals, as in the Mayor's Parlour, were a popular subject in Victorian interiors, but the Rochdale scheme is an early example. In domestic settings, such schemes have often been altered or lost and so the Rochdale interiors are nationally significant. The use of historicist imagery is less unusual in Victorian civic settings. The symbolism used in the decorative art, in wall painting, stained glass and on carved wood and stone architectural sculpture contributes to the importance of the whole interior [Plates 2.3 – 2.13].

The decorative scheme in intact high status rooms is of the **highest significance**. Current room names and numbers in brackets:

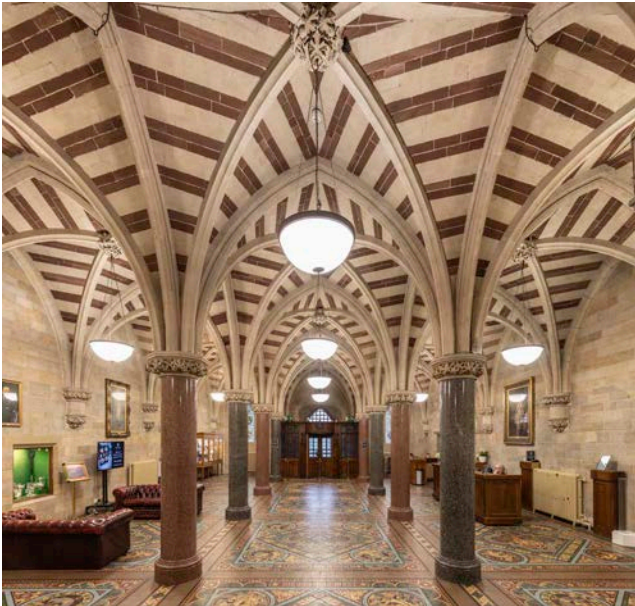
- The Exchange (G1a)
- Former Council Chamber (Reception Room) (G1b)
- Mayor's Parlour (G2a)
- Mayor's Reception Room (Committee Room 3) (G2b)
- Principal Staircase (F8)
- Great Hall (F1)
- Mayor's Vestibule (Small Exchange) (G3b)

Of **high significance** are:

- Borough Court (Council Chamber) (F15a)
- Magistrate's Retiring Room (Members' Room) (F14a)

Of **medium significance** (certain key elements have been replaced and interior further compromised by insertion of dominant new elements):

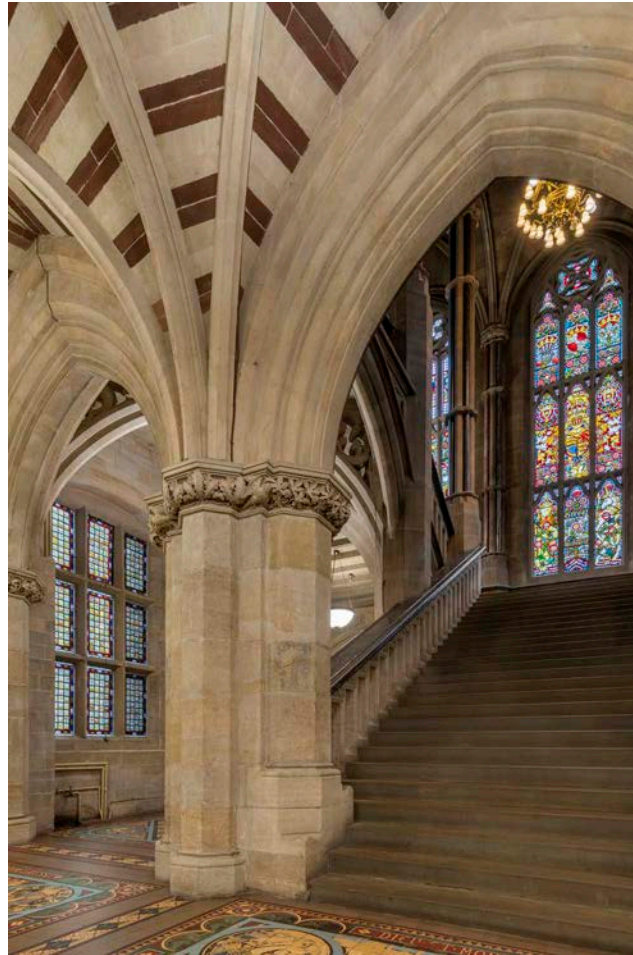
- Refreshment Room (F2a)



2.3 Gothic Revival details designed by Crossland in the Town Hall
(Damian Griffiths 2019)



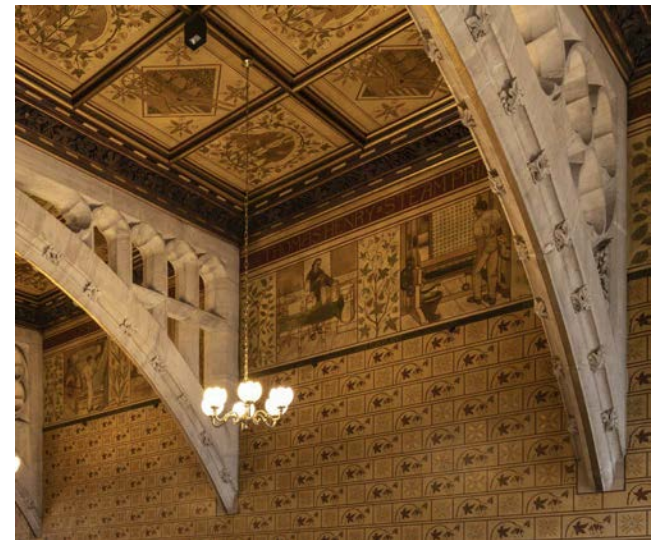
2.6 Traceried stone beams in the former Council Chamber, G1b
(Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.4 Foliate capitals by Earp in the Exchange, G1a (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.5 Polychromatic Minton floor tiles in the Exchange, G1a
(Damian Griffiths 2019)



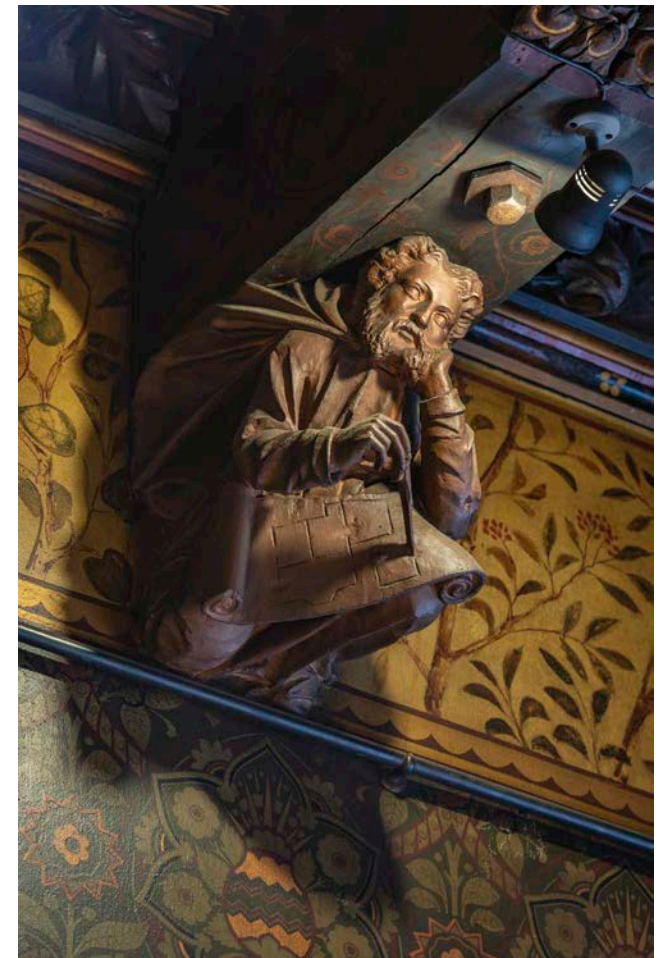
2.7 Detail of the frieze in the former Council Chamber, G1b
(Damian Griffiths 2019)



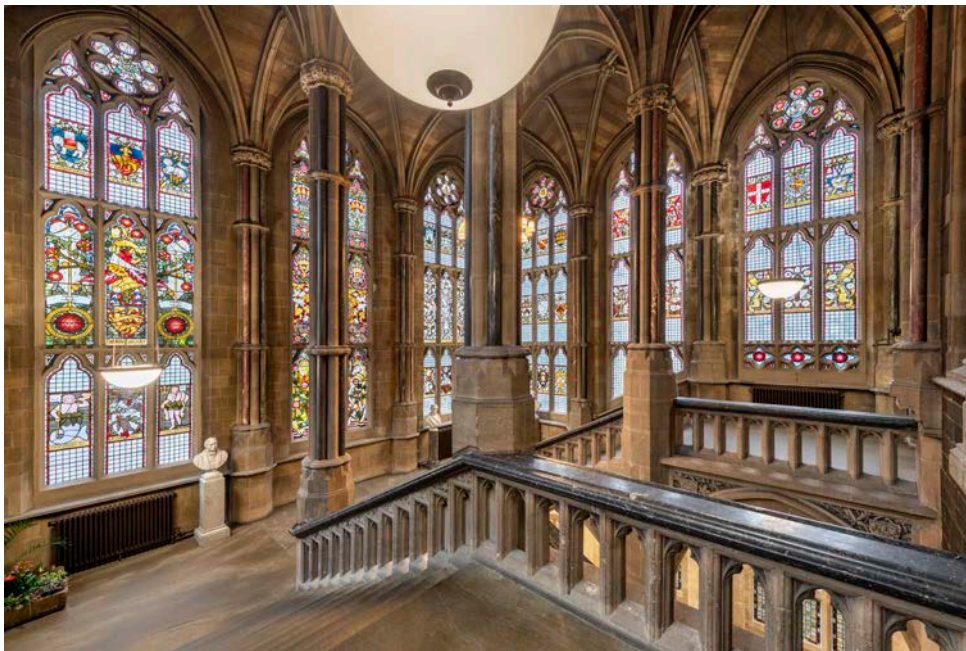
2.8 1930 screen in Mayor's Reception Room (Damian Griffiths 2019)



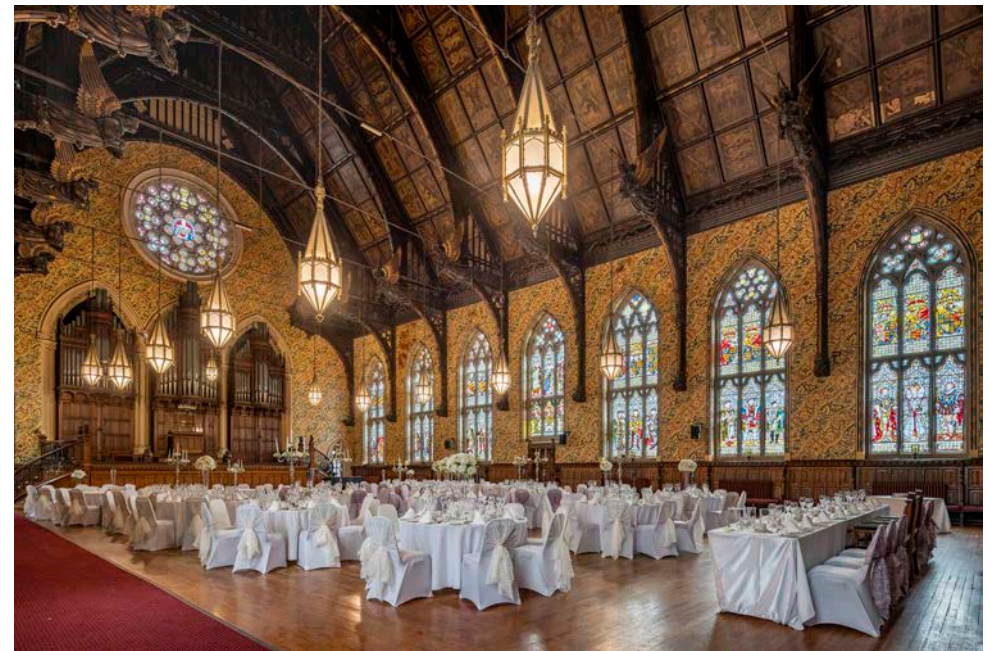
2.9 Wall stencilling in Committee Room 3 (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.10 Carved oak corbels in ground floor Committee Room (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.11 Vaulted principal staircase with stained glass representing towns with which Rochdale traded (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.12 The Great Hall with angelic hammerbeam roof (Damian Griffiths 2019)



2.13 Holiday's Magna Carta mural in the Great Hall (Damian Griffiths 2019)

2.3.4 Significance of Movable Furniture

The design of the movable furniture is less advanced than that of the architecture or the decorative painting and stained glass. The best pieces by Snowden, a local maker, are of high significance, but most of the furnishings are of medium or low significance. In contrast to the furniture designed by Waterhouse at Manchester Town Hall, the surviving furniture at Rochdale is conservative, mostly neither Gothic or Aesthetic Movement in style, nor relating well to the motifs employed in the interior design. Where pieces were designed for the Town Hall, they contribute to the overall significance of the rooms and are worth retaining.

The design of the principal furniture appears to have been based on a neo-Jacobean style in Danzig oak and incorporating lion masks, carving of holly and oak leaves and distinctive moulded edges to tables. The specifications prepared by Crossland's office for the furniture survive but the drawings have not been found, although Crossland may have designed key pieces. Some of the tables have been identified with a reasonable degree of certainty using original documentation but the lack of drawings has meant that it has not been possible to be certain that extant chairs were designed by him. The 2012 AHP Inventory included in the CMP Gazetteer appendix provides significance assessments for each piece.

2.3.5 Significance of the Town Hall to the Local Community

The decision to build a town hall was taken very soon after incorporation of the borough and, even though the building cost much more than originally estimated, funds were made available and the local and national press approved of the results. The construction of the building is not directly associated with important national political figures, although John Bright laid the foundation stone, but it was built through the influence and efforts of local politicians such as the Mayor George Ashworth, who believed that the town deserved a landmark town hall.

The building is a symbol of civic pride and identity in Rochdale, as the literal and figurative heart of the town it has high communal significance. The Town Hall has been the focus of important occasions such as VE Day at the end of the Second World War and royal visits, such as that by George V in 1913 and Queen Elizabeth II in the 1950s. The balcony over the entrance is traditionally used for dignitaries to greet the crowds. As the town's principal venue for social and public gatherings, the Town Hall is also the focus of events celebrating local people and their achievements; Gracie Fields was given the Freedom of Rochdale in a ceremony at the Town Hall, for example, whilst the Register Office has borne witness to the key events in many local lives.

The architectural grandeur and very nature of its imposing Gothic design, however, has been for some in the community a barrier to perception of accessibility and ownership. There are specific local groups which care for the town's heritage, something which attests to the strength of community locally. The Friends of

Rochdale Town Hall (FORTH) and Rochdale Cultural Heritage Group (RoCH) both value the Town Hall as a venue for large meetings and events, as a symbol of the town, as a potential tourist destination, and for its context in the town centre, surrounded by other locally important buildings. Improving the setting of the Town Hall, by the reopening of the river in 2016 has created a pedestrian area with an important relationship to the Town Hall.



3.0 Conservation Philosophy

3.0 Conservation Philosophy

The development of Rochdale Town Hall, the people responsible for its creation and its social, architectural and artistic context was fully researched at the beginning of the project - providing an assessment of significance and analysis of the building and its contents which formed the basis of the updated CMP and underpinned the development of the scheme. Central to this was the development of a conservation philosophy for the proposed scheme, focused on four key themes:

3.1 Continued use of the building in a manner sympathetic to its original use and function whilst allowing sensitive adaption to accommodate modern requirements

The continued and expanded use of Rochdale Town Hall as both a focus for the local community, an expression of active citizenship, and a revitalised visitor destination in its own right is required to retain the building in a manner very much in line with its original use. The original design provided all the functions then required of a new Council including an embodiment of civic pride, a place for public ceremony, entertainment, learning, administration, justice and other public services such as the fire brigade.

Many of these functions have outgrown the building, moving to larger buildings designed to meet the now very different scale of services offered by local authorities. These include housing, policing, the fire service, courts, library and council offices. But a physical focal point for local, regional and national pride, public ceremonies, entertainment, learning and (on a reduced scale) administration can still be provided by a revitalised Rochdale Town Hall. It is important to retain the ceremonial role of the building in relation

to the mayor and council and, more importantly, as focus for local community, active citizenship and as a wider visitor attraction to allow people to experience the exceptional heritage value of a restored Rochdale Town Hall.

3.2 Retention of the building as a key cultural facility for the local community

The original Rochdale Corporation was forward looking but its sponsors, designers and craftspeople could not have imagined the values and leisure time activities of the modern era. Social inequality, however, remains a very significant problem and Rochdale Town Hall needs to serve all facets of the local community, in the spirit of Rochdale's radical 19th-century politicians and cooperative movement founders.

Just as Rochdale Town Hall originally symbolised an unprecedented vision for an emerging industrial town, now it needs to accommodate and facilitate a new vision for a post-industrial town. Just as learning and culture were part of its original agenda, and were embodied in the building, so today can they be agents of social justice and change. New facilities should therefore be inclusive to everybody from all cultures, including or perhaps even especially from the poorest families so that they can participate in and enjoy this remarkable building. As an enduring symbol of Rochdale's local identity, pride and resilience Rochdale Town Hall is the perfect building for this task; using its inherent architectural, historic and artistic values as a foundation for greater social inclusion, regeneration and interpretation.

3.3 Repair and restoration of the building fabric and interiors

Rochdale Town Hall is an imposing and robust building externally, its character much influenced by the gritty Pennine stone of its masonry. Stylistically the exterior and interior are in perfect harmony, yet the colour, richness and joyful detail of the interior comes as something of a surprise. The interior decoration is also fragile when compared to the exterior. As an outstanding building with nationally important interiors it is crucial that the fabric of the building is in good repair to minimise decay and ensure the conservation of the fabric, which has suffered from years of use and some past unsympathetic decoration and 'restoration'. Furthermore, the creation of a dry and weather-tight building is critical to the preservation of the interior and its decorative finishes which are extremely vulnerable to water damage and damp. Major external repairs are required alongside a programme of conservation work, to remedy years of use and some past unsympathetic decoration and 'restoration'.

3.4 Sustainable use and improved access

The challenge of breathing new life into existing buildings is rarely limited to sensitive repair alone, even in a building such as Rochdale Town Hall, which has remained in constant use. The building will need to adapt to changing circumstances whilst retaining and enhancing what makes it so special, and this will require innovative design solutions and conservation approaches. Repairs must be completed to a high standard, significantly increasing its current lifespan and enabling the building to be inherently more 'green'.

This can be achieved in a variety of ways, including specifying appropriately long-lasting materials from sustainable sources, and avoiding high carbon footprints where possible through improvements to thermal and energy efficiency. The economic advantages of repurposing this building include: full use of the embodied energy which has already been expended in its construction and decoration, thus avoiding the need for new construction elsewhere; reduced use of new materials; reduced construction periods; and enhanced use of traditional building skills.

Rochdale Town Hall is one of the very finest examples of civic architecture in the country and is a highly significant communal asset to the people of Rochdale. However, the very nature of its imposing Victorian Gothic design, with limited level access renders it inaccessible both physically and – in some cases – culturally to people within the local community. In order to allow the Town Hall to truly stand as an ‘accessible’ community asset, improvements to access into and within the building are required to address issues inherent with a building designed long before the advent of modern standards, whilst being sensitive to its original design. However ‘accessibility’ goes far beyond physical barriers and the proposed scheme should bring forward improvements to the legibility and interpretation of the building’s significance, features and its historic context to improve people’s knowledge, and relationship with, this iconic building – embracing the opportunity to reengage the community through the building’s restoration.



4.0 Client Brief and Design Development

4.0 Client Brief and Design Development

4.1 Understanding the Brief

Following consent of Phase 2 and its progression on site a separate design team is working in partnership with Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) to develop proposals for Phase 3. This element of works focuses on the west wing of the Town Hall; the proposals see to complete the Town Hall's revitalised offering and include Council services, meeting rooms, and café facilities, as well as improved accessibility and circulation. A new Air Source Heat Pump system and additional insulation to the buildings envelope are also proposed to improve the buildings efficiency.

In Partnership with RDA and the Design Team an assessment of the building current facilities and condition was carried out to identified the following areas for improvement and change:

- There is a clear need for improvements to the overall building to meet the requirements of The Equality Act, as well as can be achieved within an existing building of Grade I status. Entrance accessibility should be improved where possible and internal doorways and openings should be widened with clear routes for accessibility.
- Facilities to offer a dedicated 'Changing Places' space within the building, accessible 24 hours a day and to current guidance and Rochdale Council Standards.
- Improved vertical circulation through the building, to link with the new facilities contained within Phase 2 and complete a wholistic approach to the building's accessibility.
- Fit for purpose and fully integrated mechanical, electrical, plumbing and access and security controls, with zoned access measures and public/private separation. Careful consideration should be given to the spaces of highest significance to minimise visibility and disruption to historic fabric.
- Shell and core restoration of the existing Fire Station with like-for-like materials and to restore the original plan form and offer a space for a public café/ restaurant, which could be accessed from the rear public terrace.
- The introduction of new WC facilities, spaced throughout the building.
- Repair and replacement of the existing flat roof covering to the Porte Cochère to address historic issues of water ingress. Introduction of new minimal balustrading to allow public access to the balcony, from the Great Hall.
- Conservation of the Council Chambers decorative interior, timberwork and glazing. Introduction of new facilities for accessibility, new lighting, and a full state of the art audio visual installation to facilitate council meetings in compliance with the latest Access to Democracy Standards.
- Conservation repair and modification of the Council Chamber viewing gallery to improve accessibility, visibility, and public safety.
- Restoration and repair of historic damage to the interior, including new floor finishes, panelling, paintwork, and covering to match or compliment the overall Town Hall aesthetic.
- In parallel with new fire detection and compartmentation measures; upgrading of the internal historic doors to improve fire compliance and separation.
- General improvements to aid ongoing maintenance, to include Mansafe systems to any roof access points. Improved access methods such as dedicated staircases and improved lighting services. All carried out with due regard for the significance of the Town Hall as a Grade I listed building.

These requirements and challenges were discussed at length as part of the project RIBA Stage 2/3 design development, under continual consultation with stakeholders including Rochdale Council, Council Members, Historic England, Rochdale Council Conservation, and various public community groups.

4.2 Description of the Proposals

4.2.1 Basement

Unlike the proposals for Phase 2, the basement areas within Phase 3 are not available for public access. The principal purpose is for services, plant equipment and storage. Hence there is no great need to introduce any additional wall coverings or finishes. The existing bare brick walls and stone flag or concrete slab floors would remain albeit receiving a light clean and repaint. Alteration has been kept to a minimum. Reference should be made to drawing DIA 2030 which shows the key areas of alteration highlighted in blue. A new lift shaft and pit would be formed to link the basement to the upper floors (discussed in more detail below) alongside two new openings in the walls leading to the concrete air raid shelter to provide clear access into the shelter which would form an additional storage space. All service routes are combined and ducted along the ceiling through rooms B14a,13b,c,d,e, f and utilise existing door openings and minimise the impact on the wider basement space.

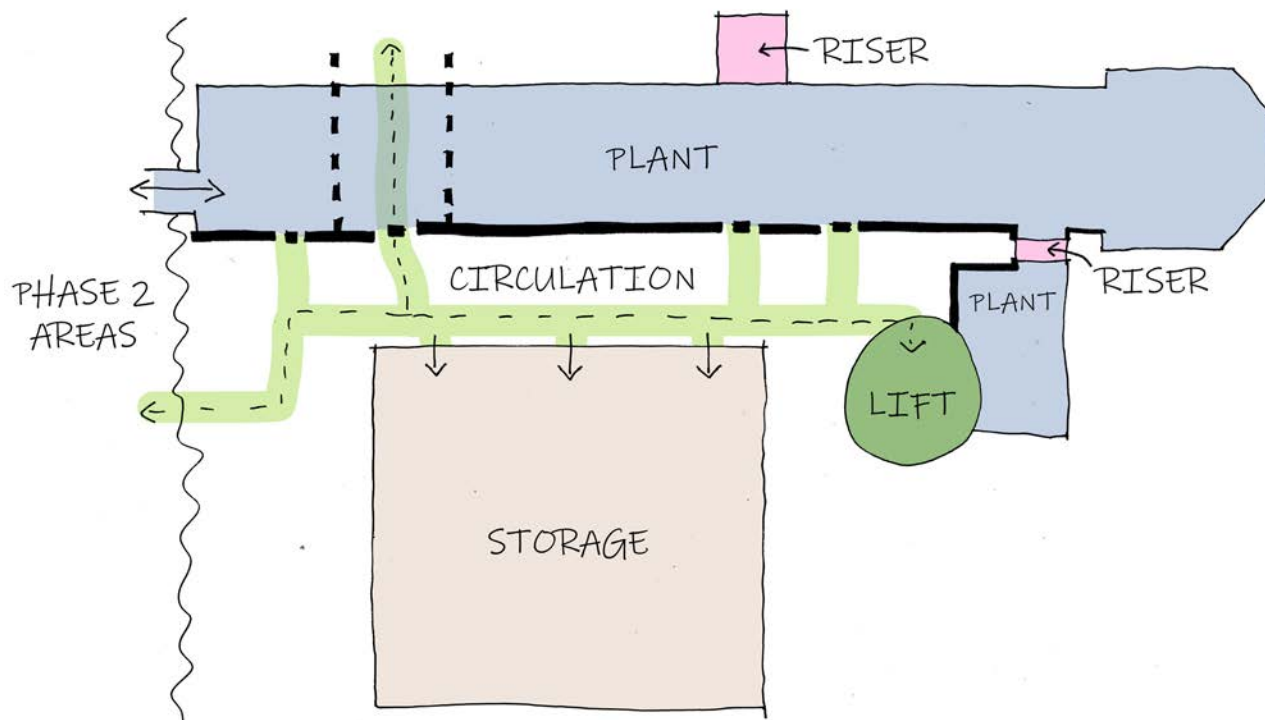
New doors are designed to resemble the traditional vertically boarded and braced doors which already exist and as established as part the of the consented Phase 2 works **[Plates 4.1a and 4.1b]**.

Significance

Medium - Low

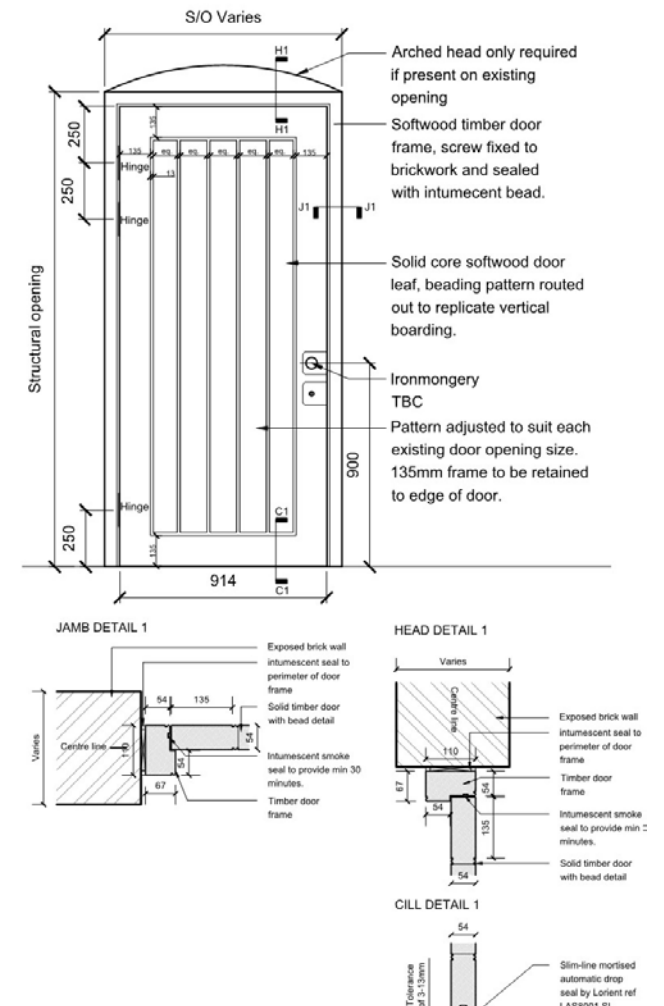
Impact

The works proposed in the basement are minor in nature, focusing back-of-house functions in a secondary location within the building. Whilst the two new openings would see the removal of some fabric, this is limited in nature and would increase the use of the air raid shelter. At this secondary, service area within the building the proposed lift shaft and pit can be accommodated without causing undue harm to significance whilst enabling egalitarian access through this public building of the highest significance which brings with it compelling public benefits.



4.1a Basement concept development

DOOR TYPE 1 30 or 60 Minute Fire Rated



4.2b Typical basement door detail

4.2.2 External Entrances

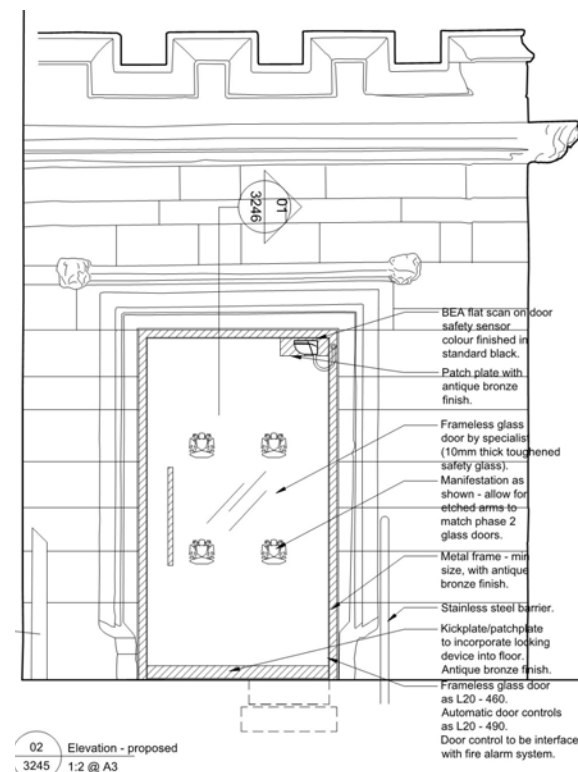
The entrance door arrangement poses a particular challenge. The west wing can be accessed by two external doors, which are rather impressive heavy timber framed with strap hinges and studs reinforcement and contribute to the appearance of the Town Hall and its significance. However, they are difficult to open and do not comply with the requirements of The Equality Act. Both doors are to be repaired and restored. Door DG12.1 located on the west spiral stair will be held open (daily) to provide access into the building with an inner door providing the security and access control. Door DG10B.1 would provide access to the proposed Changing Places and must offer weather and draft protection. It is therefore proposed fix the existing heavy timber door in the open position and fit a new fully glazed and automatically opening door within the stone reveal **[Plate 4.2]**.

Significance

High

Impact

The design solution proposed seeks to ensure that the contribution that the historic doors make to the significance of the building is retained whilst enabling the two entrances to function for its 21st century use – a key driver for the Rochdale Town Hall project. Fixing historic doors open and inserting contemporary glazing allows for this to be achieved in a discreet manner whilst the limited impact on historic fabric is justified by the creation of more accessible entrances, both physically and in terms of presenting a much more welcoming and 'open' experience.



4.2 New access door arrangement

4.2.3 Changing Places

The location of the Changing Places facility has been subject to extensive consideration. Guidance demands a specific set of requirements including that it must be located at ground floor and accessible 24 hours a day. Room G11d presented the best solution, being of an appropriate size and well located to resolve any potential conflict between private and public access. This room retains few original features and therefore this would allow for the integration of the equipment and services required with minimal impact on historic fabric; alterations to the windows would be limited to the additional of privacy coating to the glazing **[Plate 4.3]**.

Significance

Room: Low

External envelope: High

Impact

The provision of a Changing Places facility is an important element of creating a public building which is truly accessible to all and which serves its local community. The extent to which G11d has been subject to previous alteration with modern fixtures and fittings of no interest which, alongside the insertion of a suspended ceiling / mezzanine, means that there is little evidence remaining of its historic function as a day cell. The wall partition wall with the corridor appears to be modern given its thinner depth, modern door and absence of features of interest and therefore can accommodate the alterations required to create the accessible entrance required. As such the room presents the best opportunity to insert these facilities in a suitable location without impacting on the significance of the building overall.



4.3 View south showing suspended ceiling

4.2.4 Fire Station

The Fire Station is in need of considered conservation repair to address failures to the roofs and the deterioration of the external stone walls. The introduction of modern walls to subdivide the space in the recent past is of poor quality and condition and should be removed. The original structure consist of five individual pitched roofs with leaded valleys running north to south and with stone gabled frontage. Each roof is supported by principal beams to the valleys supported by cast iron columns. However much of this structure is hidden by modern finishes **[Plates 4.4 - 4.7]**.

It is proposed that a scheme of full scale repair is undertaken to the external envelope using matching Westmorland slate and stone for indent repairs and decorative replacements. New insulation wool would be introduced from above and between the existing joist to improve thermal capacity. All lead valleys have been redesigned to meet current Lead Sheet Association guidance and to cope with changing weather patterns. A new Mansafe system would also be fitted to each valley for maintenance, set back from the parapet so not to be visible from ground floor **[Plate 4.8]**.

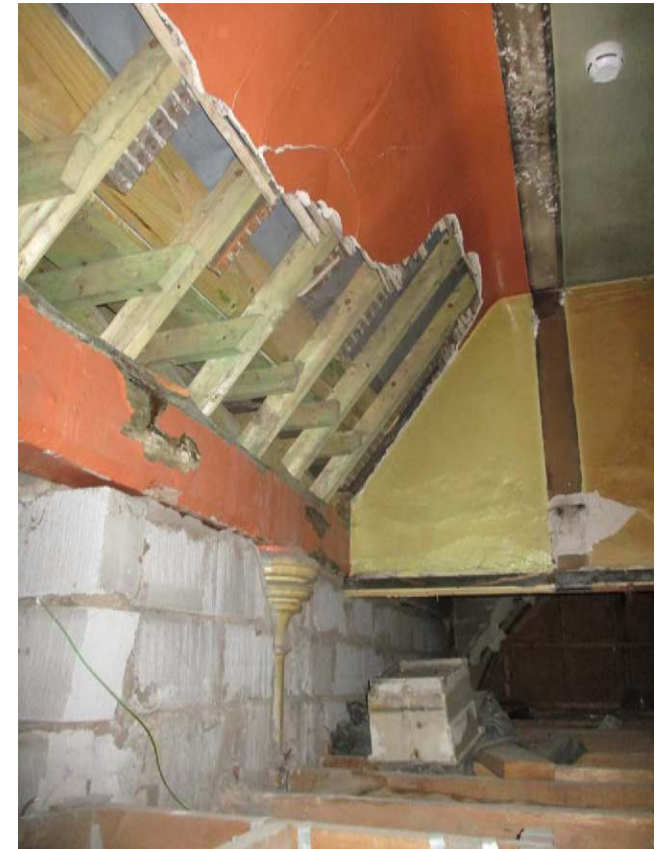
Whilst the internal layout will be determined by the appointed future operator and consent will be sought under a separate application, it is proposed that as part of those works the modern internal walls and make good of the existing ceiling with new lath and plaster.

Significance

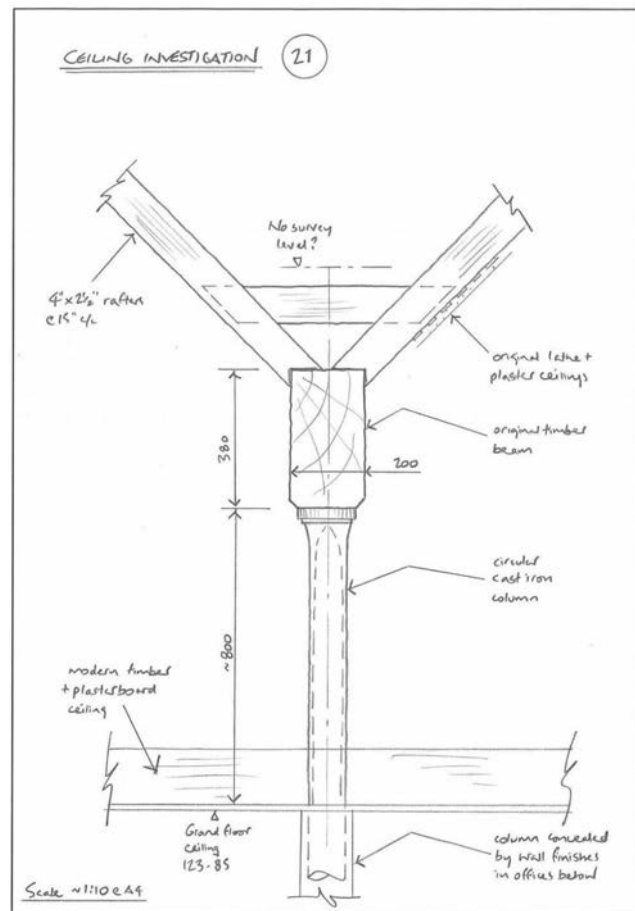
Medium

Impact

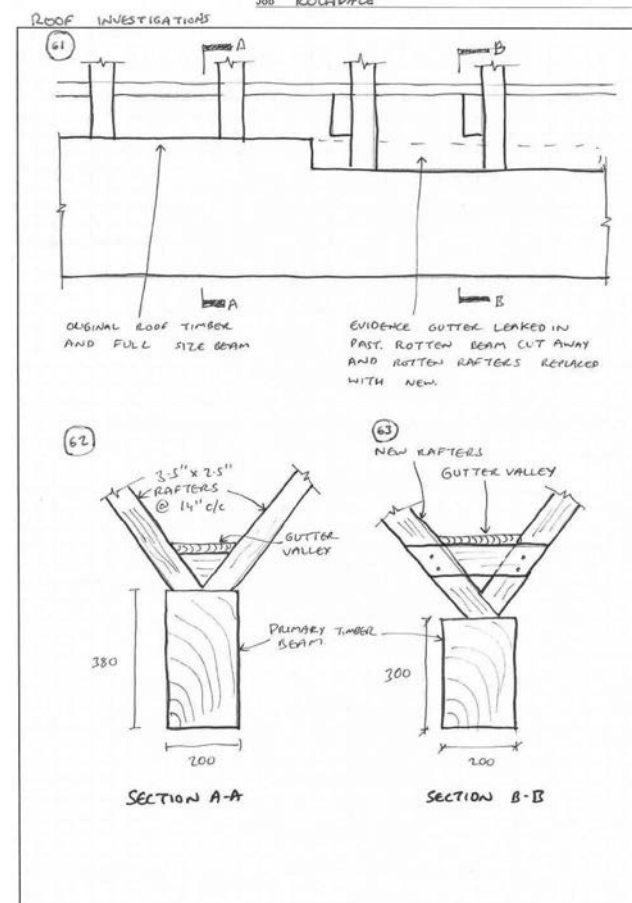
The former Fire Station has been much altered with the insertion of a mezzanine and partitions, with features of interest now concealed behind modern fabric. The future ambition for the space is to reinstate its integrity and character through the removal of these interventions, facilitated by the like-for-like repair works and insertion of maintenance systems proposed at this stage. These works would have a wholly beneficial impact on the significance of the listed building.



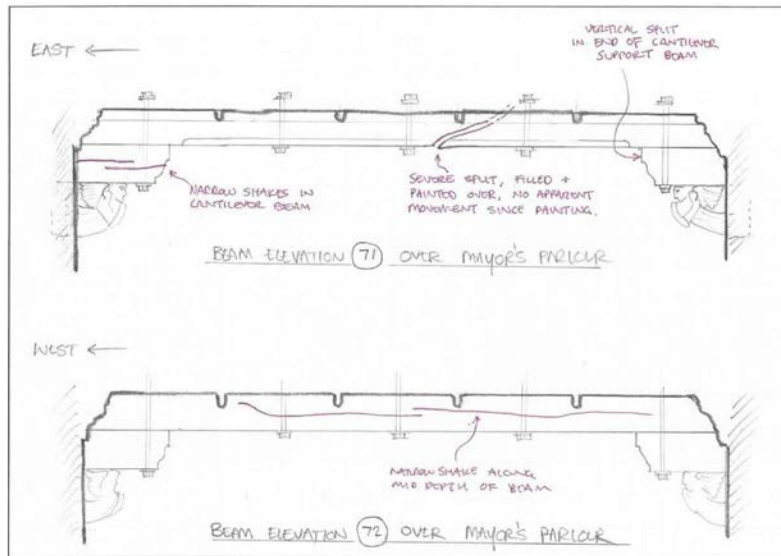
4.4 Structure concealed by modern fabric



4.5 Structural Investigation Details 21 - Fire Station columns



4.6 Structural Investigation Details 61, 62, 63
- Fire Station Roof Valley Gutters



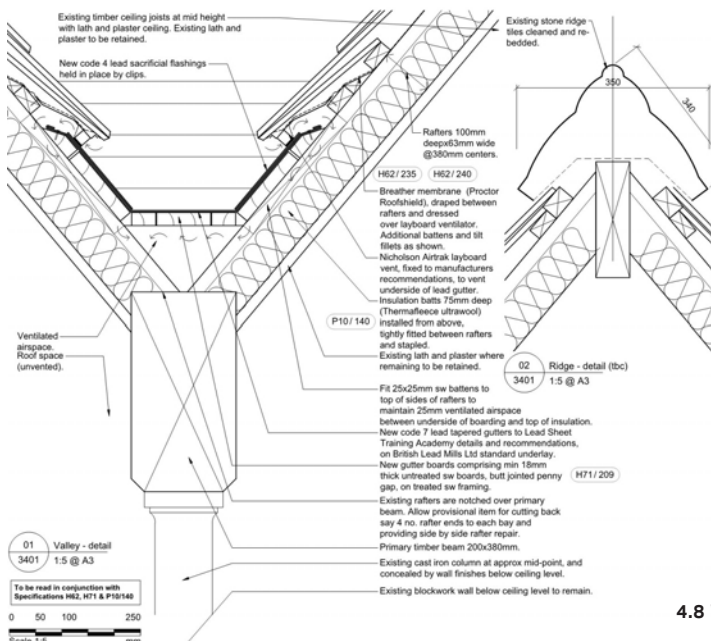
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4.7 Structural Investigation Details 71, 72
- Beams Over Mayors Parlour



4.8 Valley and ridge detail

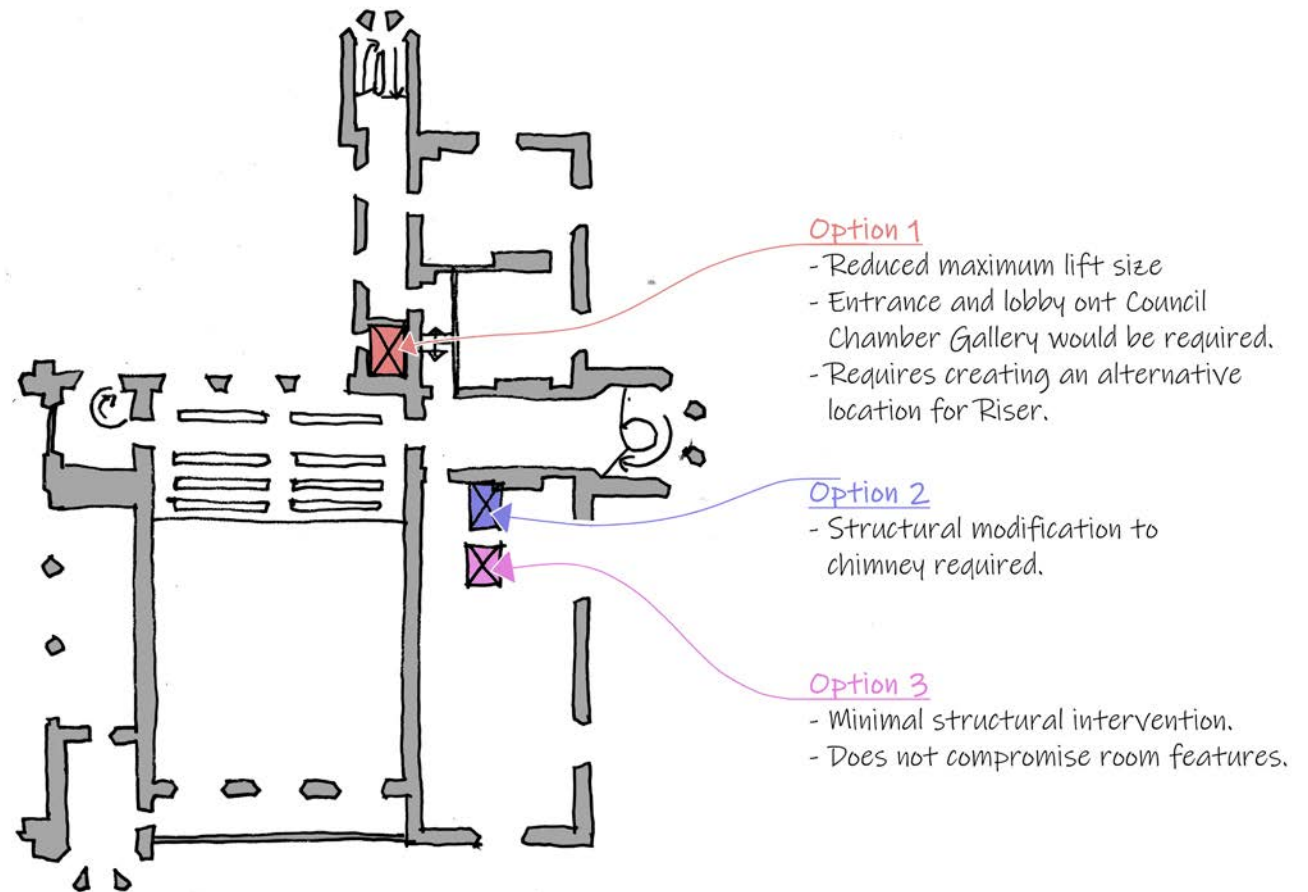
4.2.5 New Lift

A new passenger lift is proposed to provide access to each floor. Located off the main circulation corridor/ lobby adjacent to the principal spiral staircase, the new lift would offer accessibility in compliance with The Equality Act and provide assistance with moving storage materials safely through the building.

This element of the proposals has been subject to extensive design development with a number of options considered within the consultant and client team, and then presented to Rochdale Conservation Officer and Historic England. Three of the final options are summarised below [Plate 4.9], leading to the third and final option which was presented and endorsed by Rochdale's Conservation Officer and Historic England during pre-application discussions.

Option 1

Reference should be made to the sketch drawings. The original concept design from RIBA Stage 1/2 located the lift in what is the accessible WC off the first-floor main corridor, this location aligned with a series of small cupboards running vertically through the building. However, during the development of the detailed design several issues were identified. Limited space meant the lift would be under sized for the occupation numbers and would not offer compliance with The Equality Act. This location would limit access to the second floor – principally the Council Chamber Viewing Gallery, a space of highest historical value – therefore Option 1 was discounted.

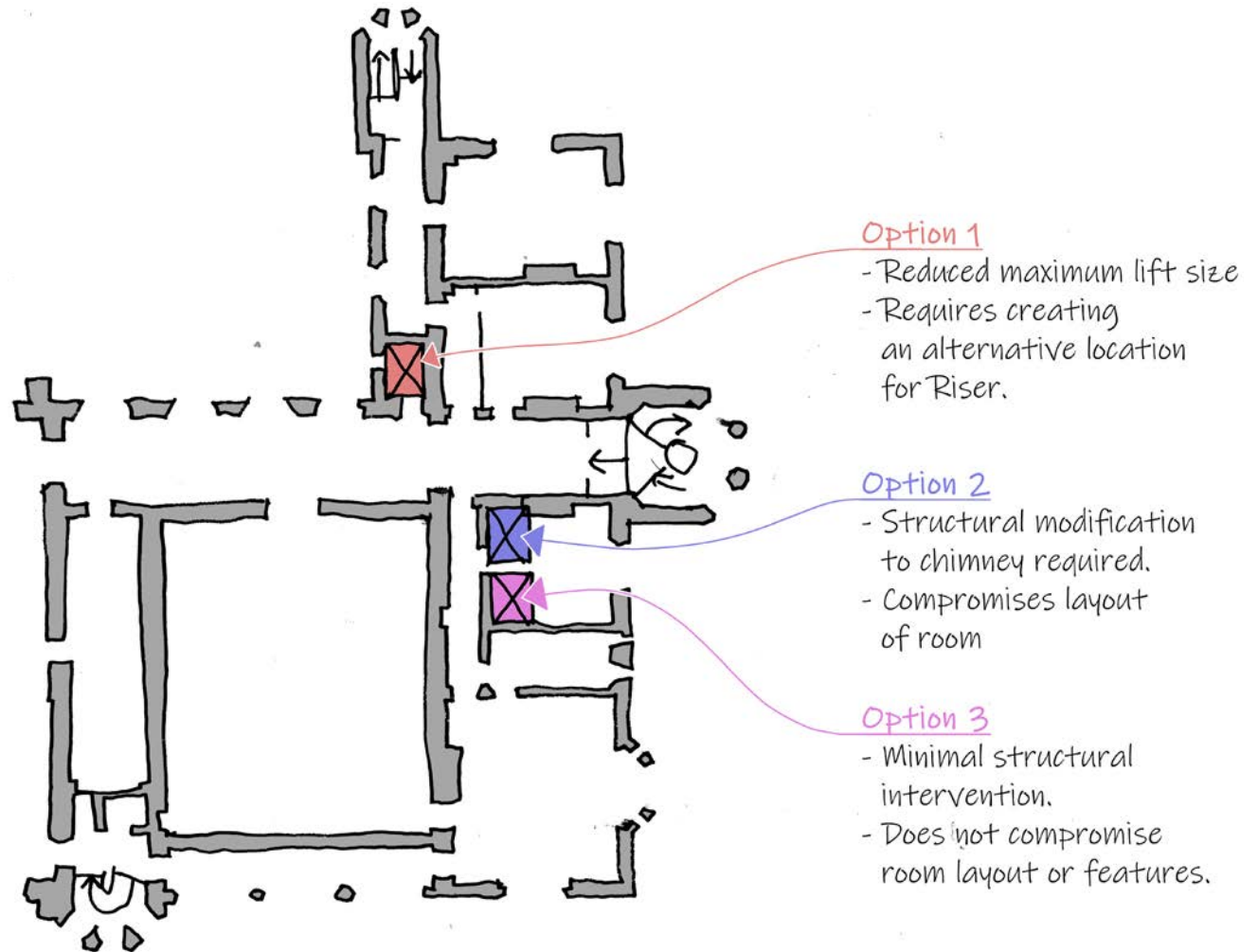


4.9 Diagram showing all three options

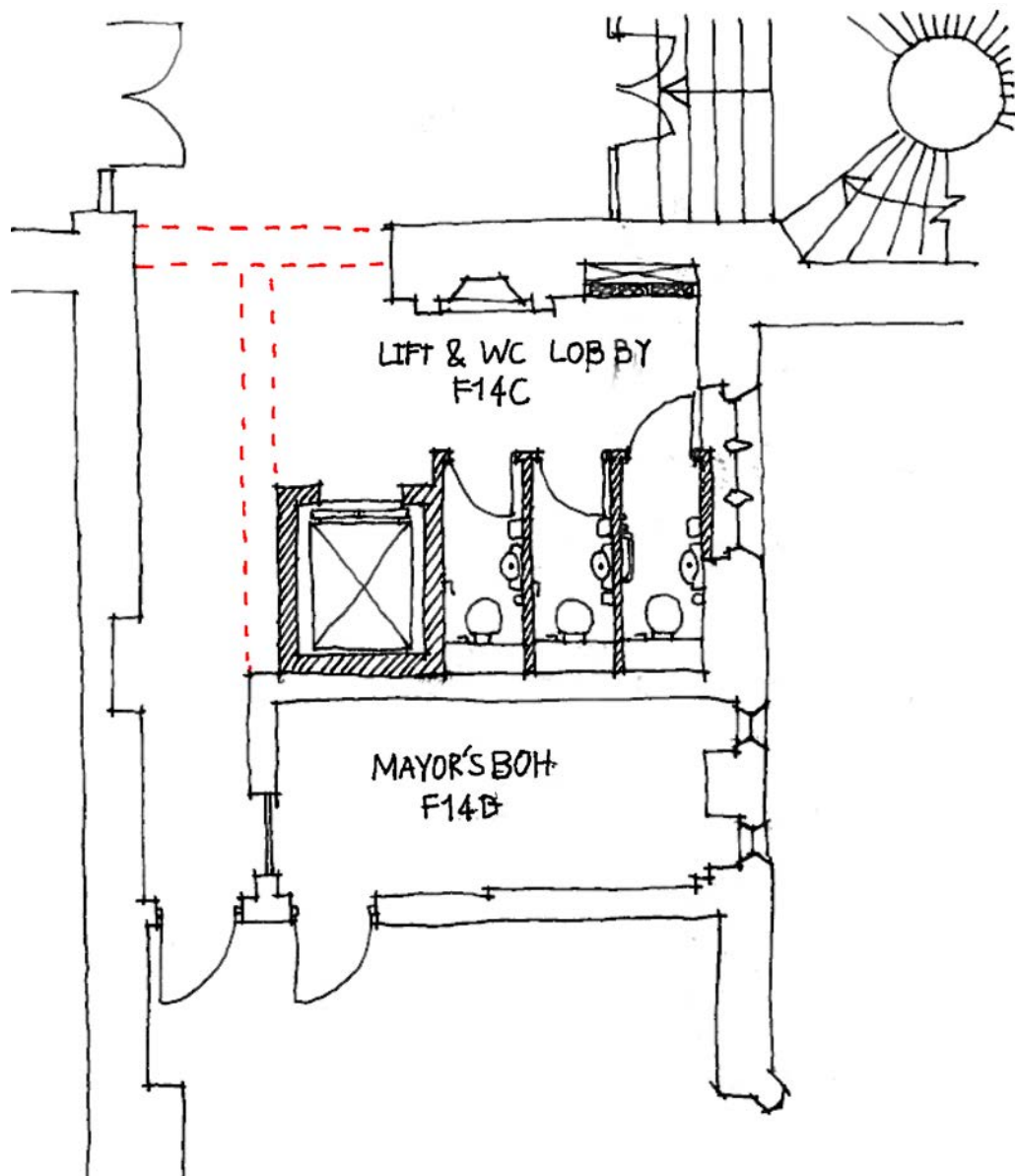
Option 2 & 3

Option 2 and 3 are located in similar parts of the building. Both would be accessed from the main entrance lobby to the building and circulation spaces on the floors above. Option 2 was eventually discounted due to restrictions of the existing structure and its impact on historic features such as the first floor fireplace. Due to the orientation of structural beams supporting the upper floors and the close proximity of the chimney stack, significant structural intervention which was considered to cause undue harm to the significance of the building [Plate 4.10].

Option 3 emerged as the favoured location, offering the same benefits as Option 2 as regards connection to the circulation space, but with less disruption to the existing building and retaining the decorative fireplace [Plate 4.11].



4.10 Lift layout with preference for option 3



4.11 Option 3 First Floor Lift And WC Lobby

Significance

Basement: Medium – Low
Ground: Low
Mezzanine: Low
First: Medium – Low
Second: Medium – Low

Impact

At basement, ground and mezzanine floors the lift would be inserted into the corner of the room away from the retained fireplace; beyond the openings required to cut through the floors the alterations would be limited to the removal of the ground floor door. At ground and mezzanine floors the spaces are of low significance owing to the alterations undertaken to insert the mezzanine and the installation of the wall to its east side (which the proposed lift would sit alongside) to subdivide the original space with no historic features remaining. At basement level the lift shaft and pit would be accommodated in a back-of-house service area and therefore would have a limited impact on significance overall.

At first floor the lift shaft would cut through one of the rooms which historically formed part of the Magistrate's Suite, since refurbished and fitted out as an office. It would run alongside the face of the wall where an opening into F14d (toilet) has been previously infilled. In order to provide the access required to the WCs and to create a lift lobby off the Main Corridor, large structural openings would be formed; the first a widening of the doorway into the main corridor (F11a), the second by cutting back the wall to the Magistrate's Corridor (F14b). Whilst there would evidently be a loss of original

fabric and a change to the plan form in this location, this area presents the only feasible space to insert the WCs required to serve the Council Chamber – with all other parts of the west wing of higher significance or not practically accessible. As part of the works the panelling would be made good and sections removed reused where possible; the door and doorcase to the main corridor would be stored in the basement whilst that serving the magistrate's corridor would be repositioned within the corridor. The proposed WC partitions would follow the aesthetic of the panelled interior to maintain its character; although this would in part obscure the mullioned window.

At second floor the former Project Office would be subdivided to accommodate the lift shaft and WCs, including an accessible WC, to serve the Council Chamber balcony. Whilst this would require subdivision of the former open plan space, again this presents the only feasible space to enable the installation of the services required to enable the viewing area to be fully accessible. As part of these works the partition which creates an oddly proportioned room at the northern end would be moved to create a deeper space and bring the window in the west façade (WS14f.2). into the room. Once again traditional doors would be proposed to the WCs whilst the partition would be stepped to align with the window mullion to window WS14a.1.

These works would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the building, albeit mitigated to a degree by the detailed design proposed and their lesser significance which is considered in the justification in Section 6 below.

4.2.6 Existing Doors

Within the West Wing there is a mix of doors of varying age and significance. As part of the design development stage each door has been recorded and a specific proposal recommended – this information is included within the submission package. The proposed repairs are based on the following principles:

- Original hardwood doors of the highest significance, such as those within the Mayor's Parlour – light touch clean, repair and upgrade to meet fire separation regulations only where necessary **[Plate 4.12]**.
- Later hardwood doors which match the original style – light touch clean, repair and upgrade to meet fire separation regulations only where necessary **[Plate 4.13]**.
- Modern Doors (30 years or less) – replace to 'front of house' areas with new hardwood doors to match original style. Retain and repair doors to 'back of house' areas. Generally upgrade doors to meet fire strategy requirements **[Plate 4.14]**.

All existing decorative ironmongery would be retained. Where new ironmongery is required, such as a new compliant door closer, products have been selected to be fully concealed and integrated within the door frame and casement so not to affect the visual appearance of the door.



View from Corridor F14b



View from Mayors Parlour F14a

Door leaf shows signs of sagging and has a visible gap at the head. Some open joints to the frame. Repair in accordance with notes 1, 5, and 7

Existing cylinder lock to be replaced
Need lock spec

Looks in good order. Overhaul existing ironmongery in accordance with note 6.1.

Remove redundant MEP and repair any holes in accordance with note 8.

Carefully remove modern ironmongery and make good any holes in the timber door. Fit new lock as specification.

Looks in good order. Overhaul existing ironmongery in accordance with note 6.1.

Repair Notes & Specification

1. **Indent repair to missing / damaged section of door**
Remove minimum amount of existing timber to form an effective repair. Ensure an effective bond between the new and existing sections of timber. Work new material to line of existing and avoid unnecessary trimming of the original timber. Repairs to follow any existing deformations in the line of the doors. Pieced-in repairs to be formed from wood to match existing. The quality and grain must match the original. The moisture content must match the original. Screw / pin fix and glue to secure splice repairs. Screw / pin fixings to be countersunk and filled flush to match colour of timber indent. Where door is to be dismantled as part of the repair process, mark and record the constituent parts before dismantling. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation.
2. **Loose / delaminated veneer**
Carefully pull back section of loose / delaminated veneer and work glue across rear with a hacksaw or piece of card. Clamp veneer in place making sure not to damage or indent outer face.
3. **Mouldings / carvings**
Select samples of original mouldings / carvings to replicate with CA. Carefully strip-off existing finish to reveal crisp clean edges. Take template of moulded / carved section and use to form new section of timber. NB: Make moulded section slightly oversized to allow for working back to precise line of existing timber.
4. **Cracked panels**
Remove cracked panels by disassembling door and repair by gluing and clamping or replace to match existing. Reassemble on completion of repairs.
5. **Open joints between frame members**
 - 5.1 Take door into workshop and check if joint is sound. If joint is sound carefully remove any loose wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon. Work glue down to base of tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to the voids left by removal of wedges from mortice. Put joints together, clamp in place and re-wedge.
 - 5.2 If joint is not sound carefully dismantle only those components of the door required to achieve a sound and stable repair. Before disassembly, mark and record the constituent parts. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation. Renew damaged stiles / rails as required (to be agreed with CA once door has been disassembled). Renewed section to be in similar timber of existing. If existing timber is SW, new timber is to be pressure impregnated.
 - 5.3 If required, strengthening of joints is to be carried-out using 20mm wide, 125mm x 125mm, 2mm thick stainless steel angles recessed into edge of head and stile of door at 4 no corners. Any areas of strengthening to be agreed onsite with CA once door has been disassembled.
6. **Overhaul existing ironmongery:**
 - 6.1 Where no repairs have been identified, remove any dirt / debris from the existing ironmongery using a dry lint free cloth and lubricate all moving components.
 - 6.2 Where existing ironmongery has been identified as needing to be overhauled, mark and record the constituent part before removing and take into workshop. Carefully disassemble the component and clean its constituent parts with a lint free cloth. Identify any missing or damaged parts and report to the CA. Contractor to source replacement parts from basement stockpile with the CA. Once missing / damaged parts have been installed, reassemble, lubricate all moving parts and reinstall component in its original position.
 - 6.3 Where existing ironmongery is damaged beyond repair / missing contractor to source replacement component from basement stockpile (if possible)
7. **Re-set a sagging door leaf**
 - 7.1 Where existing door leaf is square / matches profile of door frame rebate, pack / realign hinges to ensure consistent gap between the door leaf and frame rebate. Ease and adjust as necessary.
 - 7.2 Where existing door leaf no longer matches profile of door frame rebate, take into workshop. Carefully remove existing wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to voids left by removal of wedges from mortice. Put door joints

back to match profile of door frame rebate, clamp in place and re-wedge. Rehang door, ease and adjust as necessary.

8. Infilling holes:

8.1 Where existing holes are small, fill with a high performance wood filler colour matched to the existing timber. Ensure filler is applied slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.

8.2 Where existing holes are medium / large, install timber pellet. Pellet to be secured in place with glue and formed from wood to match existing. Gain of pellet to be aligned with grain of existing timber. Pellet to be installed slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.

9. Leaded lights

Record and photograph all leaded lights, to include basic measurements. Mark and record identify of all components being dismantled and which opening they are from. Photographs of each panel to be taken from the interior and exterior and notes of dimensions, construction details etc, are to be taken and copies supplied to the CA prior to the removal of windows. Remove leaded lights back to glass studio for rebuilding, ensuring minimum flexing of the panels during removal and transportation. Rubbing must be taken prior to the dismantling of glazed panel. Gently clean both sides of glass using de-ionised water and soft brushes/cloths. Any further cleaning required / employing of alternative techniques, is to be discussed with CA beforehand. Allow for full condition survey of cleaned down glazing to be undertaken by specialist contractor and CA. Replace broken / missing glass with new panes to match existing. New glass is to match old glass and be of similar thickness. See door schedule for approximate amount of renewal to be undertaken. Provide samples of all replacement glass to CA for approval prior to rebuilding of glass pane. Notify CA of any sections of damaged glass not indicated in the schedule and agree any additional replacement in advance of work. Carefully rebuild damaged areas of glass pane allowing for re-leading as appropriate. Sample of lead came to be provided prior to commencement of re-leading. Lead comes are to be selected to exactly match the dimensions of both the heart and flange of the existing comes. The profile should be matched to the original as closely as possible. e-assemble glass panes and allow for specialist conservator to re-insert refurbished lights back into the window frames. The glass panes should, as closely as possible, match their appearance prior to the works. Great care is to be taken to ensure existing glass is not damaged as part of the works. Where existing glass pane is sound but loose, allow to re-pack the perimeter of the pane and refix perimeter glazing bead tight up against glass pane.

10. Existing Modern glass panes

Remove existing glazing beads, along with all traces of existing packing, putty and adhesives. Replace existing glass pane with new. Securely fix fire-rated glass pane and fire rated glazing channel (if required) in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Refix the existing glazing beads in place.

11. Existing Intumescent strips:

Carefully remove any existing intumescent / weather strips from the door leaf and frame along with all traces of adhesive. Where existing intumescent / weather strips have been related into the door frame, carry out an indent repair as per item 1.

12. Missing / modern screws:

Remove all philips/posidriv head / modern screws as indicated in the door schedule and replace with brass slotted head screws. Reinstall any missing screws as indicated in the door schedule with brass slotted head screws. Replacement slotted head screws to be dome / countersunk head as indicated and sized to match existing adjacent screws.

13. Re-hang door leaf:

Carefully remove door hinges from frame and infill existing screw holes as per item 8. Where door is to swing in opposite direction, install existing hinges on the opposite side of the hinge stile using original screws and carry out indent repair as item 5 to missing sections of hinge stile. Where required install new timber rebate to match material and finish of existing door leaf and architraves. Install door leaf in new position as indicated on GA's using original screws. Ease and adjust as necessary.

NOTES

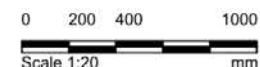
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General Notes

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Any doors or ironmongery to be taken from site should be carefully recorded and catalogued by the contractor and the process for removal agreed with the client team.

All existing doors are to be protected with temporary coverings for the duration of the work to prevent damage from site traffic.



4.12 Typical repair to Primary Historic Doors



Note: Door to be upgraded and to achieve 30 minutes fire separation

Fit new concealed closer.

Remove redundant lock and make good door leaf and frame in accordance with note 8.2

Infill hole in existing door leaf as note 8.2. Damage also to the brass cover plate, which will need repair or replacement.

Remove brass letter box and discard. Patch holes as note 8.2

3no. existing hinges to be replaced with new modern fire rated hinges to EN1935.

View from Lobby F11a



Door to be upgraded to provide 30 minutes fire integrity. Fit new intumescent seals and line rear of door panels as per section AA

Remove redundant lock and make good door leaf and frame in accordance with note 8.2

Infill hole in existing door leaf as note 8.2. Damage also to the brass cover plate, which will need repair or replacement.

Fit new casement lock to align with existing key hole and knobs

Allow for cleaning of timber door and frame to remove all dirt and grime and retreating with Osmo Oil.

View from Green Room F11e

Repair Notes & Specification

1. Indent repair to missing / damaged section of door

Remove minimum amount of existing timber to form an effective repair. Ensure an effective bond between the new and existing sections of timber. Work new material to line of existing and avoid unnecessary trimming of the original timber. Repairs to follow any existing deformations in the line of the door. Piece-in repairs to be formed from wood to match existing. The quality and grain must match the original. The moisture content must match the original. Screw / pin fix and glue to secure splice repairs. Screw / pin fixings to be countersunk and filled flush to match colour of timber indent. Where door is to be dismantled as part of the repair process, mark and record the constituent parts before dismantling. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation.

2. Loose / delaminated veneer

Carefully pull back section of loose / delaminated veneer and work glue across rear with a hacksaw or piece of card. Clamp veneer in place making sure not to damage or indent outer face.

3. Mouldings / carvings

Select samples of original mouldings / carvings to replicate with CA. Carefully strip-off existing finish to reveal crisp clean edges. Take template of moulded / carved section and use to form new section of timber. NB: Make moulded section slightly over-sized to allow for working back to precise line of existing timber.

4. Cracked panels

Remove cracked panels by disassembling door and repair by gluing and clamping or replace to match existing. Reassemble on completion of repairs.

5. Open joints between frame members

5.1 Take door into workshop and check if joint is sound. If joint is sound carefully remove any loose wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon. Work glue down to base of tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to the voids left by removal of wedges from mortice. Pull joints together, clamp in place and re-wedge.

5.2 If joint is not sound carefully dismantle only those components of the door required to achieve a sound and stable repair. Before disassembly, mark and record the constituent parts. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation. Renew damaged stiles / rails as required (to be agreed with CA once door has been disassembled). Renewed section to be in similar timber of existing. If existing timber is SW, new timber is to be pressure impregnated.

5.3 If required, strengthening of joints is to be carried-out using 20mm wide, 125mm x 125mm, 2mm thick stainless steel angles recessed into edge of head and stile of door at 4 no corners. Any areas of strengthening to be agreed onsite with CA once door has been disassembled.

6. Overhaul existing ironmongery:

6.1 Where no repairs have been identified, remove any dirt / debris from the existing ironmongery using a dry lint free cloth and lubricate all moving components.

6.2 Where existing ironmongery has been identified as needing to be overhauled, mark and record the constituent part before removing and take into workshop. Carefully disassemble the component and clean its constituent parts with a lint free cloth. Identify any missing or damaged parts and report to the CA. Contractor to source replacement parts from basement stockpile with the CA. Once missing / damaged parts have been installed, reassemble, lubricate all moving parts and reinstall component in its original position.

6.3 Where existing ironmongery is damaged beyond repair / missing contractor to source replacement component from basement stockpile (if possible)

7. Re-set a sagging door leaf

7.1 Where existing door leaf is square / matches profile of door frame rebate, pack / realign hinges to ensure consistent gap between the door leaf and frame rebate. Ease and adjust as necessary.

7.2 Where existing door leaf no longer matches profile of door frame rebate, take into workshop. Carefully remove existing wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to voids left by removal of wedges from mortice. Pull door joints back to match profile of door frame rebate, clamp in place and re-wedge. Rehang door, ease and adjust as necessary.

8. Infilling holes:

8.1 Where existing holes are small, fill with a high performance wood filler colour matched to the existing timber. Ensure filler is applied slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.

8.2 Where existing holes are medium / large, install timber pellet. Pellet to be secured in place with glue and formed from wood to match existing. Grain of pellet to be aligned with grain of existing timber. Pellet to be installed slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.

9. Leaded lights

Record and photograph all leaded lights, to include basic measurements. Mark and record identity of all components being dismantled and which opening they are from. Photographs of each panel to be taken from the interior and exterior and notes of dimensions, construction details etc, are to be taken and copies supplied to the CA prior to the removal of windows. Remove leaded lights back to glass studio for rebuilding, ensuring minimum flexing of the panels during removal and transportation. Rubbing must be taken prior to the dismantling of glazed panel. Gently clean both sides of glass using de-ionised water and soft brushes/cloths. Any further cleaning required / employing of alternative techniques, is to be discussed with CA beforehand. Allow for full condition survey of cleaned down glazing to be undertaken by specialist contractor and

CA. Replace broken / missing glass with new panes to match existing. New glass is to match old glass and be of similar thickness. See door schedule for approximate amount of renewal to be undertaken. Provide samples of all replacement glass to CA for approval prior to rebuilding of glass pane. Notify CA of any sections of damaged glass not indicated in the schedule and agree any additional replacement in advance of works.

Carefully rebuild damaged areas of glass pane allowing for re-leading as appropriate. Sample of lead came to be provided prior to commencement of re-leading. Lead comes are to be selected to exactly match the dimensions of both the heart and flange of the existing comes. The profile should be matched to the original as closely as possible, e-assembly glass panes and allow for specialist conservator to re insert refurbished lights back into the window frames. The glass panes should, as closely as possible, match their appearance prior to the works. Great care is to be taken to ensure existing glass is not damaged as part of the works. Where existing glass pane is sound but loose, allow to re-pack the perimeter of the pane and refix perimeter glazing bead tight up against glass pane.

10. Existing Modern glass panes

Remove existing glazing beads, along with all traces of existing packing, putty and adhesives. Replace existing glass pane with new. Securely fix fire rated glass pane and fire rated glazing channel (if required) in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Refix the existing glazing beads in place.

11. Existing Intumescent strips:

Carefully remove any existing intumescent / weather strips from the door leaf and frame along with all traces of adhesive. Where existing intumescent / weather strips have been rebated into the door frame, carry out an indent repair as per item 1.

12. Missing / modern screws:

Remove all philips/positiv head / modern screws as indicated in the door schedule and replace with brass slotted head screws. Reinstall any missing screws as indicated in the door schedule with brass slotted head screws. Replacement slotted head screws to be dome / countersunk head as indicated and sized to match existing adjacent screws.

13. Re-hang door leaf:

Carefully remove door hinges from frame and infill existing screw holes as per item 8. Where door is to swing in opposite direction, install existing hinges on the opposite side of the hinge stile using original screws and carry out indent repair as item 5 to missing sections of hinge stile. Where required install new timber rebate to match material and finish of existing door leaf and architraves. Install door leaf in new position as indicated on CA's using original screws. Ease and adjust as necessary.

NOTES

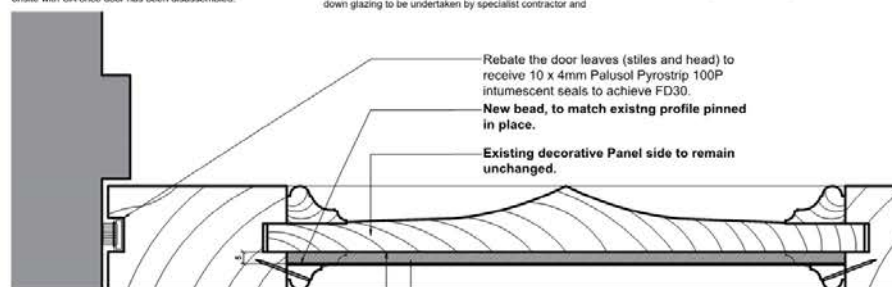
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General Notes

Before any work takes place each door should be inspected by the Conservation Architect, Principal Designer, and Specialist joinery sub contractor to establish and agree the scope of repair and door performance requirements.

Any doors or ironmongery to be taken from site should be carefully recorded and catalogued by the contractor and the process for removal agreed with the client team.

All existing doors are to be protected with temporary coverings for the duration of the work to prevent damage from site traffic.



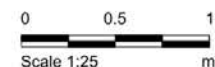
Rebate the door leaves (stiles and head) to receive 10 x 4mm Palusol Pyrostrip 100P intumescent seals to achieve FD30.

New bead, to match existing profile pinned in place.

Existing decorative Panel side to remain unchanged.

Rear of panel faced with Palusol SW2, 5mm thick and finished with a veneer of heavy oak (0.6mm thick) to match existing door colour.

Palusol bonded to rear of panel using Odice Pyrocol A by Noroseal.



4.13 Typical repair to Secondary Historic Doors



View from Stair F10

Note: Door to be upgraded and to achieve 30 minutes fire separation

Minor timber patch repair to frame following removal of surface wiring. Repair as item 8.2

Unscrew beading and replace existing Georgian wired with new Promat Pyrosec 7 and trims as detail.

Remove door closer, and make good door frame and leaf ready to receive concealed closer.

Overhaul existing ironmongery as per item 6.1

3no. existing hinges to be replaced with new modern fire rated hinges to EN1935.



View from Lobby F11c

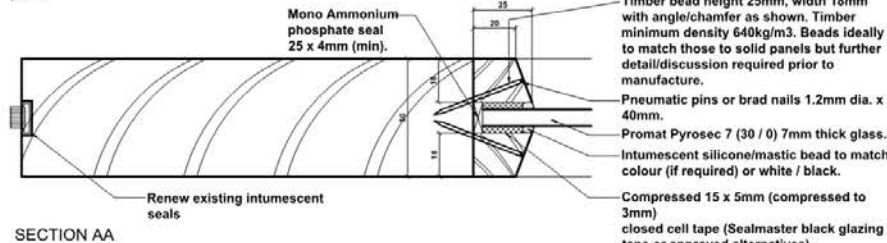
Remove all signage and prepare the door to receive new.

Fit new intumescent seals

Allow for cleaning of timber door and frame to remove all dirt and grime and retreating with Osmo Oil.

Repair Notes & Specification

1. **Indent repair to missing / damaged section of door**
Remove minimum amount of existing timber to form an effective repair. Ensure an effective bond between the new and existing sections of timber. Work new material to line of existing and avoid unnecessary trimming of the original timber. Repairs to follow any existing deformations in the line of the doors. Placed-in repairs to be formed from wood to match existing. The quality and grain must match the original. The moisture content must match the original. Screw / pin fix and glue to secure splice repairs. Screw / pin fixings to be countersunk and filled flush to match colour of timber indent. Where door is to be dismantled as part of the repair process, mark and record the constituent parts before dismantling. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation.
2. **Loose / delaminated veneer**
Carefully pull back section of loose / delaminated veneer and glue across rear with a hacksaw or piece of card. Clamp veneer in place making sure not to damage or indent outer face.
3. **Mouldings / carvings**
Select samples of original mouldings / carvings to replicate with CA. Carefully strip-off existing finish to reveal crisp clean edges. Take template of moulded / carved section and use to form new section of timber. NB: Make moulded section slightly over-sized to allow for working back to precise line of existing timber.
4. **Cracked panels**
Remove cracked panels by disassembling door and repair by gluing and clamping or replace to match existing. Reassemble on completion of repairs.
5. **Open joints between frame members**
 - 5.1 Take door into workshop and check if joint is sound. If joint is sound carefully remove any loose wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon. Work glue down to base of tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to the voids left by removal of wedges from mortice. Pull joints together, clamp in place and re-wedge.
 - 5.2 If joint is not sound carefully dismantle only those components of the door required to achieve a sound and stable repair. Before disassembly, mark and record the constituent parts. Store in a safe place and on dry bases. Protect from abrasion, damage and saturation. Renew damaged stiles / rails as required (to be agreed with CA once door has been disassembled). Renewed section to be in similar timber of existing. If existing timber is SW, new timber is to be pressure impregnated.
 - 5.3 If required, strengthening of joints is to be carried-out using 20mm wide, 125mm x 125mm, 2mm thick stainless steel angles recessed into edge of head and stile of door at 4 no corners. Any areas of strengthening to be agreed onsite with CA once door has been disassembled.
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 - 6.2 Where existing ironmongery has been identified as needing to be overhauled, mark and record the constituent part before removing and take into workshop. Carefully disassemble the component and clean its constituent parts with a lint free cloth. Identify any missing or damaged parts and report to the CA. Contractor to source replacement parts from basement stockpile with the CA. Once missing / damaged parts have been installed, reassemble, lubricate all moving parts and reinstall component in its original position.



SECTION AA

6.3 Where existing ironmongery is damaged beyond repair / missing contractor to source replacement component from basement stockpile (if possible)

7. **Re-set a sagging door leaf**
 - 7.1 Where existing door leaf is square / matches profile of door frame rebate, pack / realign hinges to ensure consistent gap between the door leaf and frame rebate. Ease and adjust as necessary.
 - 7.2 Where existing door leaf no longer matches profile of door frame rebate, take into workshop. Carefully remove existing wedges and apply glue to shoulders of the tenon with a hacksaw blade or piece of card. Apply glue to voids left by removal or wedges from mortice. Pull door joints
8. **Infilling holes:**
 - 8.1 Where existing holes are small, fill with a high performance wood filler colour matched to the existing timber. Ensure filler is applied slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.
 - 8.2 Where existing holes are medium / large, install timber pellet. Pellet to be secured in place with glue and formed from wood to match existing. Gain of pellet to be aligned with grain of existing timber. Pellet to be installed slightly proud of the existing surface and sanded back to a smooth seamless finish.
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10. **Existing Modern glass panes**
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NOTES

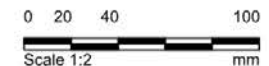
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4.2.8 Porte Cochère Roof & Balcony

As part of the consented Phase 2 works the Porte Cochère would be enclosed with the addition of fully glazed panels to each of the archways, creating a warm, dry and welcoming entrance experience for visitors. In continuation of this work Phase 3 seeks consent for the reinstatement of public access to the Porte Cochère balcony for use in connection with the Great Hall, for public address purposes, and displays such as at Christmas.

The Porte Cochère has a flat roof arrangement (replaced in concrete at the end of the 19th century), supported by a three bay stone vaulted ceiling below. The existing structure is suitably robust and it is not anticipated that any modification would be required to the existing structure. A stone pierced quatrefoil balustrade frames the balcony, punctuated by four gilded heraldic lions. The roof itself is subdivided into three areas by the two large stone flying buttresses supporting the north facing elevation to the Great Hall [Plates 4.16a-f].

The existing balustrade does not provide the required fall protection. To avoid the need to create fixings into stone, which could cause permanent damage it is proposed to install a fully reversible integrated balustrade and decking system which would sit on the existing roof surface and be easily removed in the future should this be required.

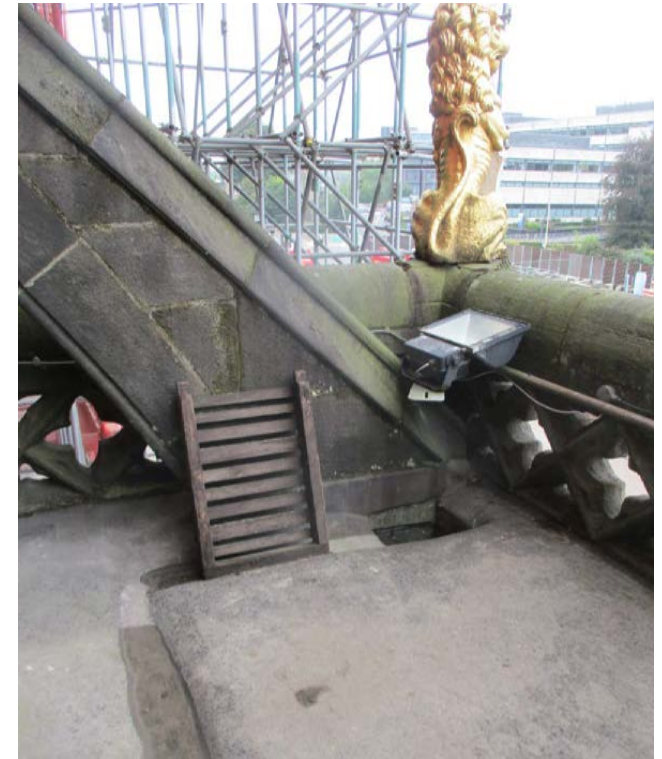
Within the central bay, minimal glass balustrading is proposed. This would be set back from the stone balustrade and, owing to its glass finish, would be almost invisible when viewed from the front approach, The Esplanade or South Parade [Plates 4.17 - 4.19].

Significance

Highest

Impact

As an element of the highest significance as part of the original external composition, great care has been taken to develop a proposal which does not cause harm to the special qualities of the Porte Cochère or its role in the overall composition of the principal façade. The proposed deck and balustrade would form a subtle and entirely reversible intervention which follows the aesthetic approach to the infilling of the Porte Cochère below consented as part of the Phase 2 works. Furthermore it would allow for the balcony to be brought back into use for public address purposes, as it functioned historically, connecting the internal activities with the assembly function of the wider public realm and therefore the local community.



4.16a Porte Cochere roof buttress, balustrade, and gilded lion



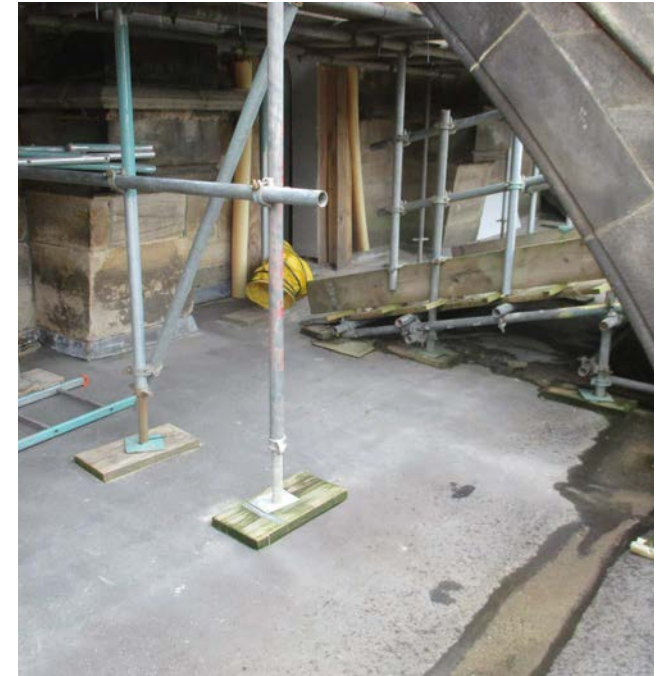
4.16b Porte Cochere roof



4.16c *Porte Cochere roof*



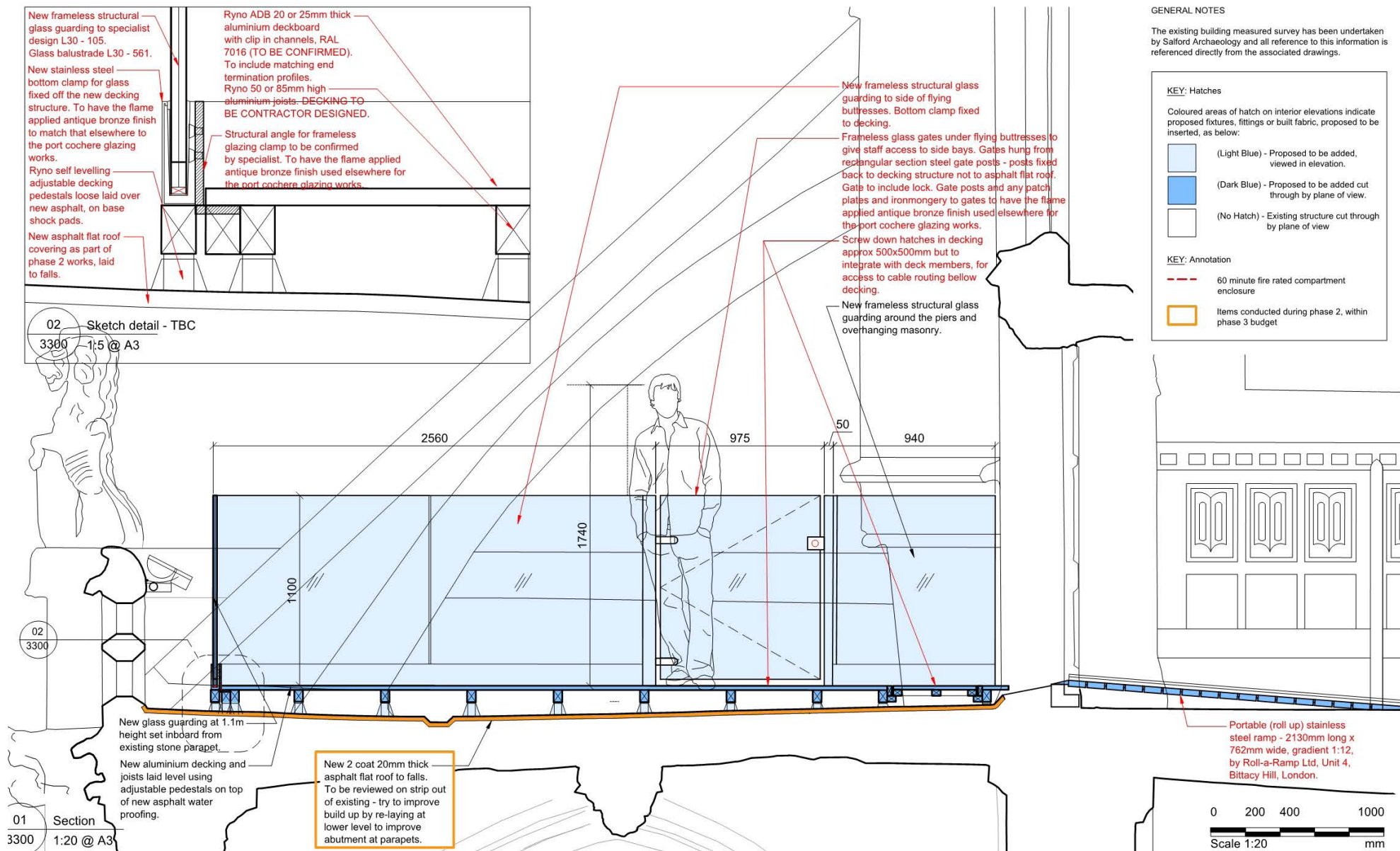
4.16c *Porte Cochere roof*



4.16c *Porte Cochere roof*



4.16f *Porte Cochere roof, open balustrade*



4.17 As proposed section through the Porte Cochere



4.18 Porte Cochere balcony glazing visualisation - view on approach



4.19 Porte Cochere balcony glazing visualisation - view from north-east

4.2.9 Council Chamber

A key space within the Town Hall and of the highest significance within the Phase 3 area of works [Plates 4.20 - 4.24]. The Council Chambers interior would undergo a complete series of conservation repairs:

The magnificent stain glass windows would be repaired and restored by York Glazing Trust, with the introduction of minimal secondary glass to improve thermal performance and prevent the occurrence of interstitial condensation which can lead to deterioration of the original glass. The fine wall finishes, and panelling would be restored and sections redecorated in period paints, confirmed by sample testing. The highly decorative ceiling timbers and plaster panelling would to be carefully conserved and repaired back to its former glory by Lancashire Conservation Studios.

It is also proposed that the Council Chamber would undergo a series of modifications to improve accessibility, function, and flexibility of the space. The existing floor consists of a modern plywood timber deck, this would be removed and replaced with a new flooring whilst the seating and terracing of the floor would be rationalised to improved accessibility and offer designated wheel chair desking. A concealed platform lift would also be introduced to offer wheelchair access to the dias.

A new state of the art audio visual installation would offer greater capacity for council meetings and public live streaming to meet Rochdale's Councils aspiration for 'democracy for all'. Large TV screens would be concealed in the flooring and raise up upon

requirement. Speakers would be integrated into the suspended lighting to minimise their visibility on the historic space [Plate 4.25].

Significance

Highest

Impact

Whilst the Council Chamber is a room of the highest significance, alterations undertaken during the 1980s to convert it from the Borough Court saw the removal of the dock and other furnishings and their replacement with fitted benches in a semi-circle and a new bench to the north. As such the proposals can be accommodated without causing harm to what is significance about the space – principally its decorative scheme which would be repaired and conserved as part of the works proposed. Whilst in itself this would enhance the significance of the space, it is the proposal to create the access and flexibility required to allow the Council Chamber to continue to function in this civic role which is of greatest benefit to the significance of the Town Hall overall.



4.20 Existing Council Chamber looking to the dais



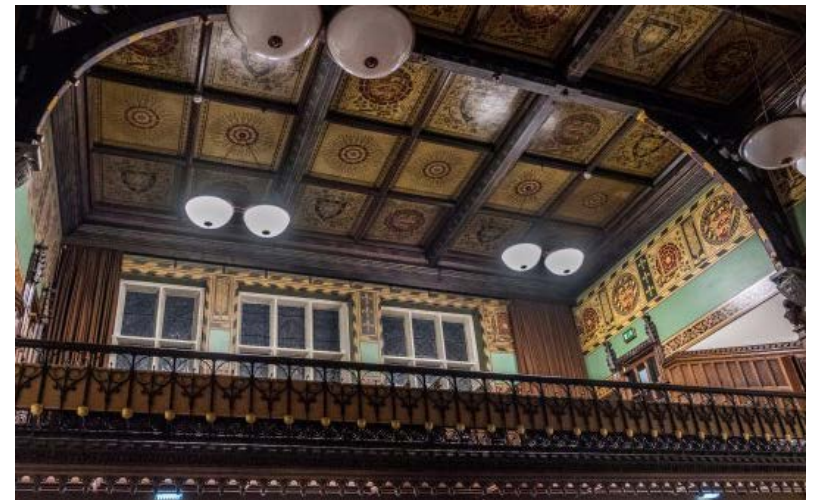
4.21 Existing Council Chamber looking to gallery



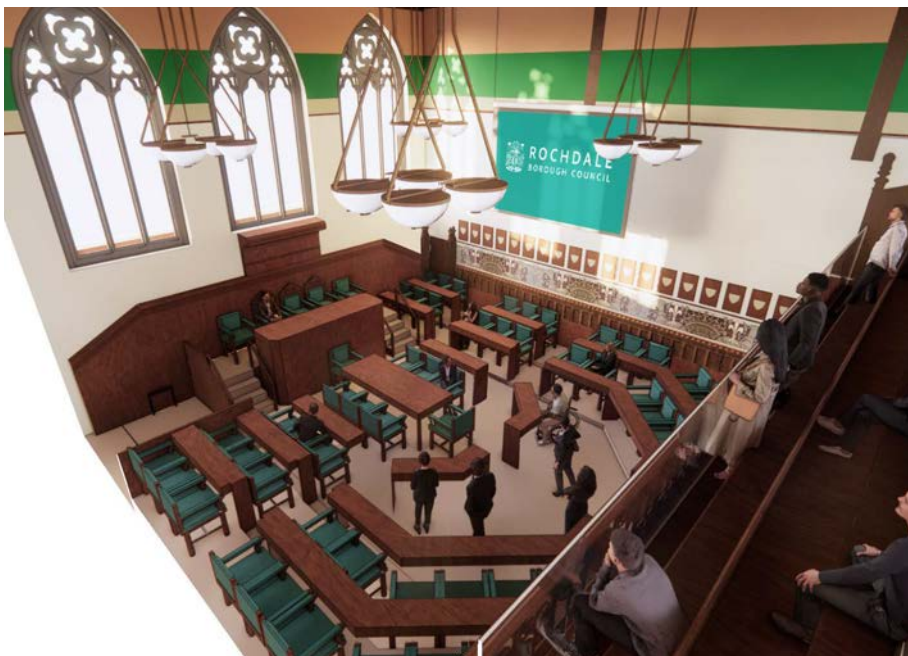
4.22 Existing Council Chamber view from the gallery



4.23 Existing Council Chamber ceiling looking to gallery



4.24 Existing Council Chamber looking to gallery ceiling



4.25 3D visualisation of proposed Council Chamber

4.2.10 Mayor's Parlour

Much the same as the Council Chamber, the Mayor's Parlour (former Magistrate's Retiring Room) is of the highest significance. This space too will undergo a full scheme of conservation. The adjoining room (F14d, historically a WC but converted to office use and of lesser quality) would be repurposed to offer support services to the Mayor's Parlour including a small kitchenette [Plates 4.26 – 4.30].



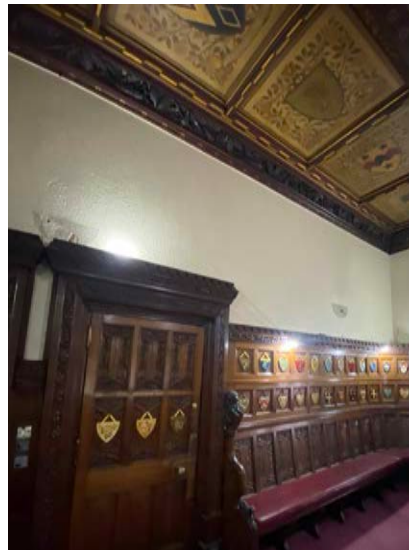
4.26 Mayors Parlour - existing condition



4.27 Mayors Parlour - existing condition



4.28 Mayors Parlour - existing condition



4.29 Mayors Parlour - existing condition



4.30 Mayors Parlour - existing condition

4.2.11 Mayor's Corridor

The Mayor's Corridor (F15b, former Magistrate's Gallery) performs an important function to the operation of the building, providing a private access from ground floor up stair S16 to the Mayor's Parlour. Over recent years it has fallen into significant disrepair with damage from roof leaks leading to deterioration of the ceiling and wall plaster. It is proposed to restore this space and conserve the original features including the windows and decorative Minton tile floor **[Plate 4.31]**.

Significance

Mayor's Parlour: Highest
Mayor's Corridor F15b: High
Room F14d: Medium - Low

Impact

The proposals here would be entirely beneficial, repairing and restoring spaces of high significance to secure their long-term conservation and providing the facilities necessary for their on-going use.

GENERAL NOTES

Survey: Allow for touch test and re-survey of plaster walls and cornices with high level access and good lighting once walls have been stripped of redundant fixtures, fittings, services, linings etc.

Survey: Note - not all areas surveyed where concealed by large pieces of furniture.

Existing Plaster: Areas of plaster can appear sound but when tapped are hollow sounding indicating potential loss of key with substrate. If no works are planned in these areas the plaster will remain in situ and as found.

Allow to make good all localised plaster damage caused by screw fixings, plugs etc. as clause (NBS M20/567)

Refer to Decorations Schedule for preparation and re-finishing. Rub down and redecorate all plaster wall surfaces following completion of repairs.

Refer to Decorations Schedule for preparation and re-finishing to stone window surrounds where new metal windows inserted in Phase 2.

Refer to New Door Schedule and Repair Door Schedule for works to door sets.

Please note, drawings must be displayed/printed in colour.

KEY

WC Woodchip wall paper
A Anaglypta wall paper
L Lining Wallpaper

Where the above is noted on the elevations, the full plaster wall is covered unless stated otherwise.
Allow for completely removing (M52/350)
Include provisional sum (20%) of wall area for re-plastering to address potential defects once wall has been stripped.
Include provisional sum (100%) of re-coating wall area with EcoMortar R50 or R100 depending on substrate once exposed (M20/200).

☒ Reinstatement of lost areas of plaster to masonry walls (M20/595)
Include provisional sum (10%) for re-plastering of any areas of failed existing plaster removed from walls.

☒ Carefully remove added/damaged plaster back to a sound line (M20/532) and reinstate area of plaster to masonry walls (M20/595)

☒ Localised repair of depressions, gouges and the like (NBS M20/555)

☒ Localised repair where redundant fixtures, fittings, boxings and services have been removed. (NBS M20/567)

☒ Repair existing water damaged plaster (NBS M20/569)

☒ Repair top coat of plaster on sound undercoat (NBS M20/599)

☒ Run in-situ plaster to skirting - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/110)

☒ Run in-situ plaster cornice - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/645)

☒ Cast fibrous plaster cornice - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/680)

☒ Repair cracks in plaster work (NBS M20/598)

☒ Small or previously repaired cracks. Inspect further once lining paper is removed (NBS M20/597)

☒ Cracks to cornice refer to cornice drawing for specific works

☒ Joinery repairs - refer to drawing for specific works

Water Damage:
Allow for new plaster including window reveal
roll mould. Plaster appears friable and
possibly 'live' - TBC following high level
access inspection.

Spalled surface to cornice from water
damage. Allow new run in situ section to
match existing.
NBS M20/ 693

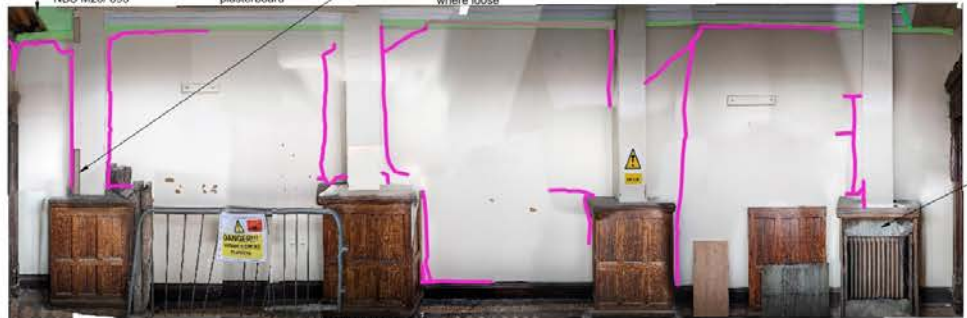


01 F15b - North Elevation
3548 1:50 @ A3

Spalled surface to cornice from
water damage. Allow new run
in situ section to match existing
NBS M20/ 693

Cornice may be cast fibrous
plaster cornice replacement
as ceiling appears to be
plasterboard

Timber corner bead to
plaster casing piers -
Allow for re-pinning
where loose



Temporarily removed existing joinery:
radiator casing to be fully reinstated
to good order.

02 F15b - South Elevation
3548 1:50 @ A3



Temporarily removed
existing joinery: Door
architraves and
entablature to be fully
reinstated to good order.

Evidence of water staining
but plaster appears sound.
Allow provisional sum for
re-plastering over door.

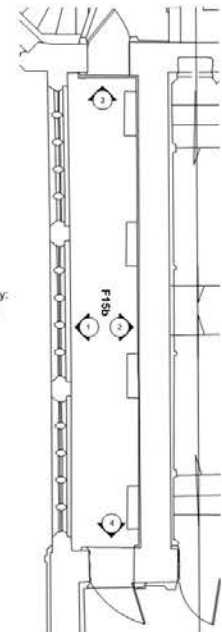
03 F15b - East Elevation
3548 1:50 @ A3



04 F15b - West Elevation
3548 1:50 @ A3

NOTES

The existing building measured survey has been undertaken by Stafford Architecture
and all reference to this information is referenced directly from the associated
drawings.



00 F15b - Key Plan
3548 Scale 1:100 @ A3

0 0.5 1 2.5
Scale 1:50 m

4.31 Mayors Corridor proposed repairs - existing condition

4.2.12 Access Stair S16

Due to significant historical water ingress over the organ roof, the plaster to the southern wall of Stair 16 has been damaged and removed. The roof has now been repaired as part of Phase 2 works and the damp plaster removed to allow the wall to dry out. As part of the Phase 3 works it is proposed to reinstate the plaster with a breathable lime. Alongside this repair work a new access stair up to an existing door would be constructed. This stair would be fabricated in hardwood to match the decorative interior and allow access for maintaining roofs, gutters, and any future external cleaning of the Council Chamber windows [Plate 4.32].

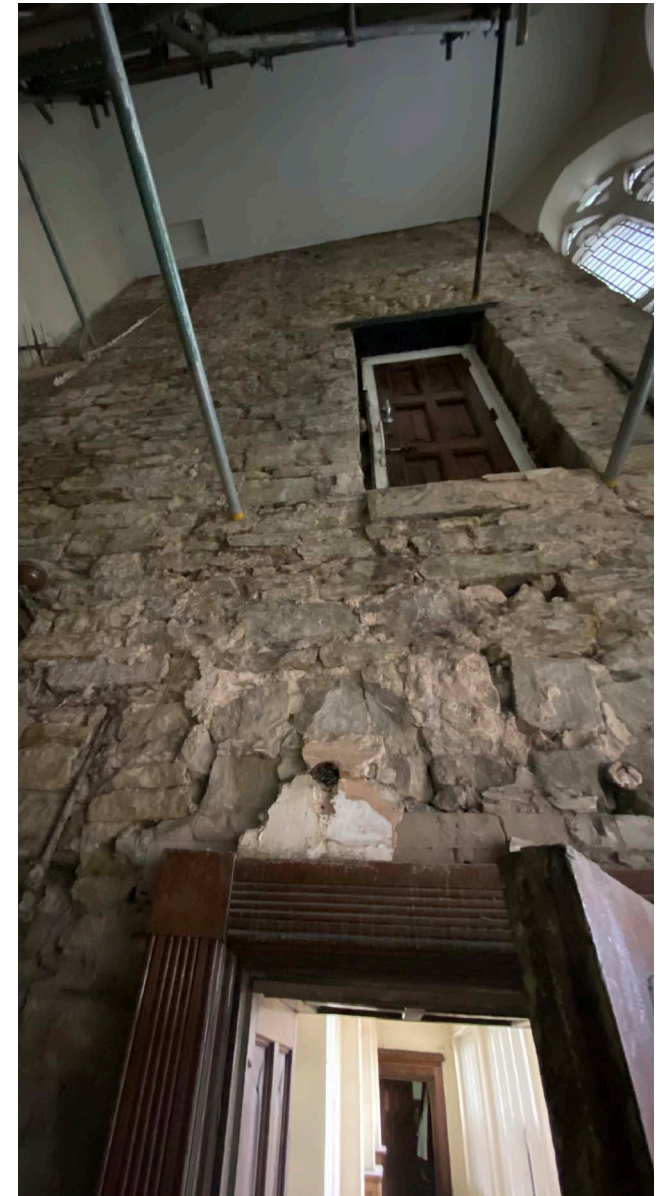
The new staircase would lead up from the existing landing which gives access to the rear of the organ. The design of the structural support required has sought to minimise the intervention to the wall and external gallery structure with two Gallows brackets attached to the southern external wall to support the top landing. The balustrade detail would be a simplified version of that service the organ access stair (itself installed in the 1930s), with minimal removal of the existing balustrade to create an opening for these new stairs to pass through [Plate 4.33].

Significance

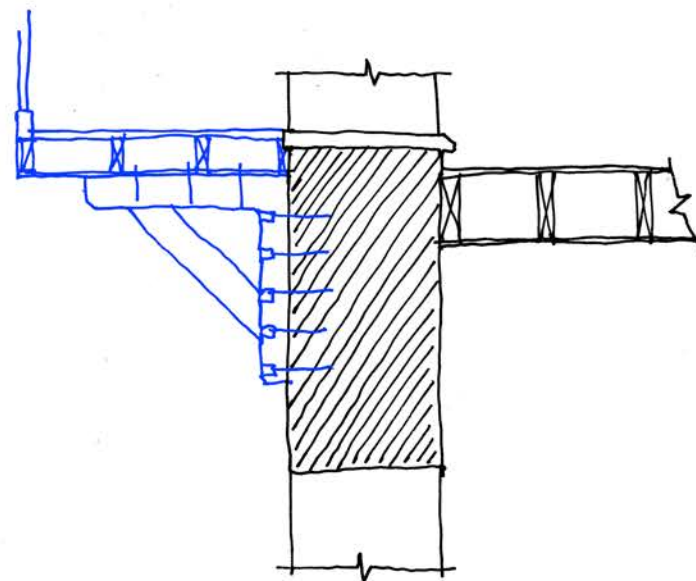
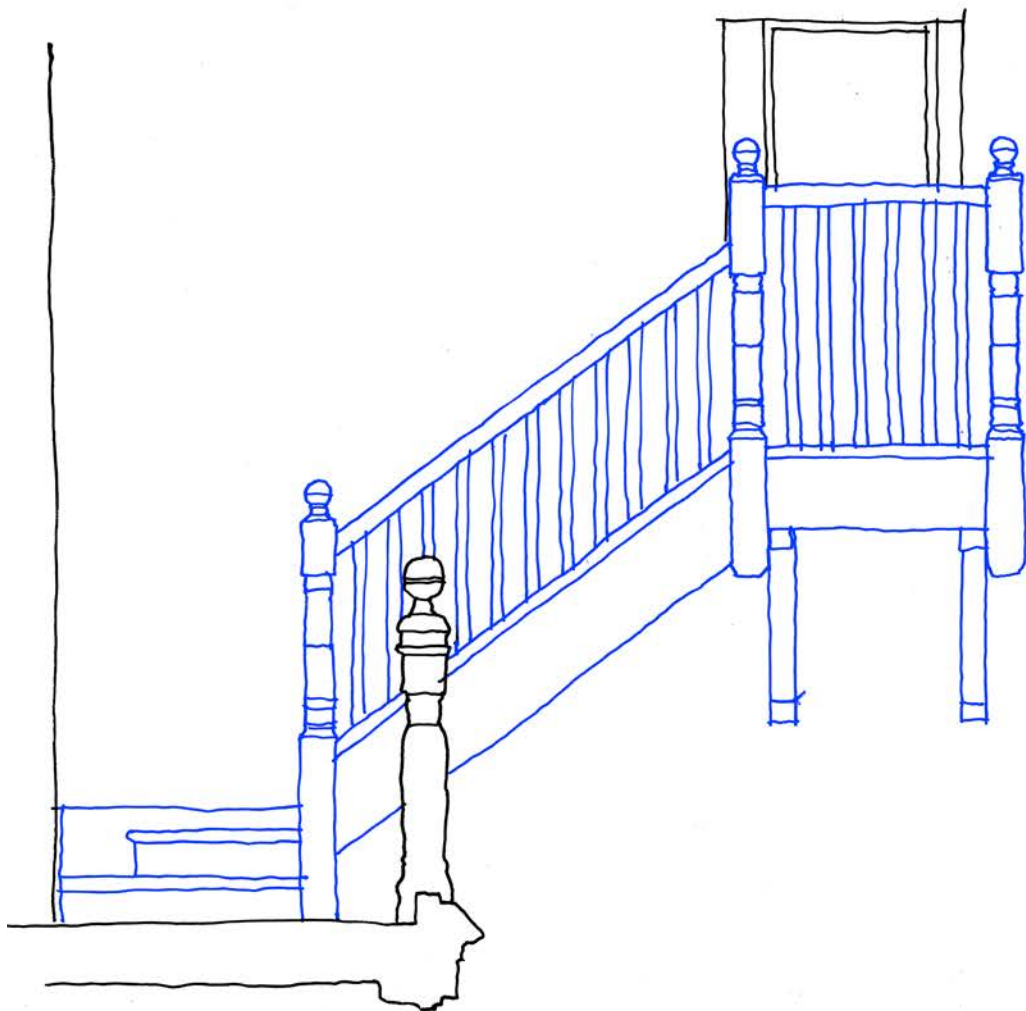
High Significance

Impact

The repair and conservation works proposed would be entirely beneficial. Whilst the proposed stair would form a new intervention within the space, this follows the principal established by the stair providing access to the organ in 1913 (itself of lower significance) whilst the design would be a parred back reinterpretation to be clearly of its era. This staircase enclosure provides the opportunity to insert a staircase to the existing door with minimal impact on historic fabric whilst ensuring the future maintenance of the roof area above which is clearly required given the degradation of both this staircase and the Mayor's Corridor which in terms, securing the conservation of the historic fabric of this part of the building in the long-term.



4.32 Existing condition of wall to stair S16 due to damp issues from roof



4.33 Maintenance balcony stairs

4.2.13 Council Chamber Gallery

The Gallery requires considered alterations to meet contemporary requirements. The gallery balustrade is too low to meet modern safety standards and, in parts unsecure. A secondary balustrade is proposed, sitting behind the existing to improve the safety and security of the Gallery. By using a minimal glazed balustrade and setting it inboard of the existing balustrade the visual impact from the Council Chamber would be minimised.

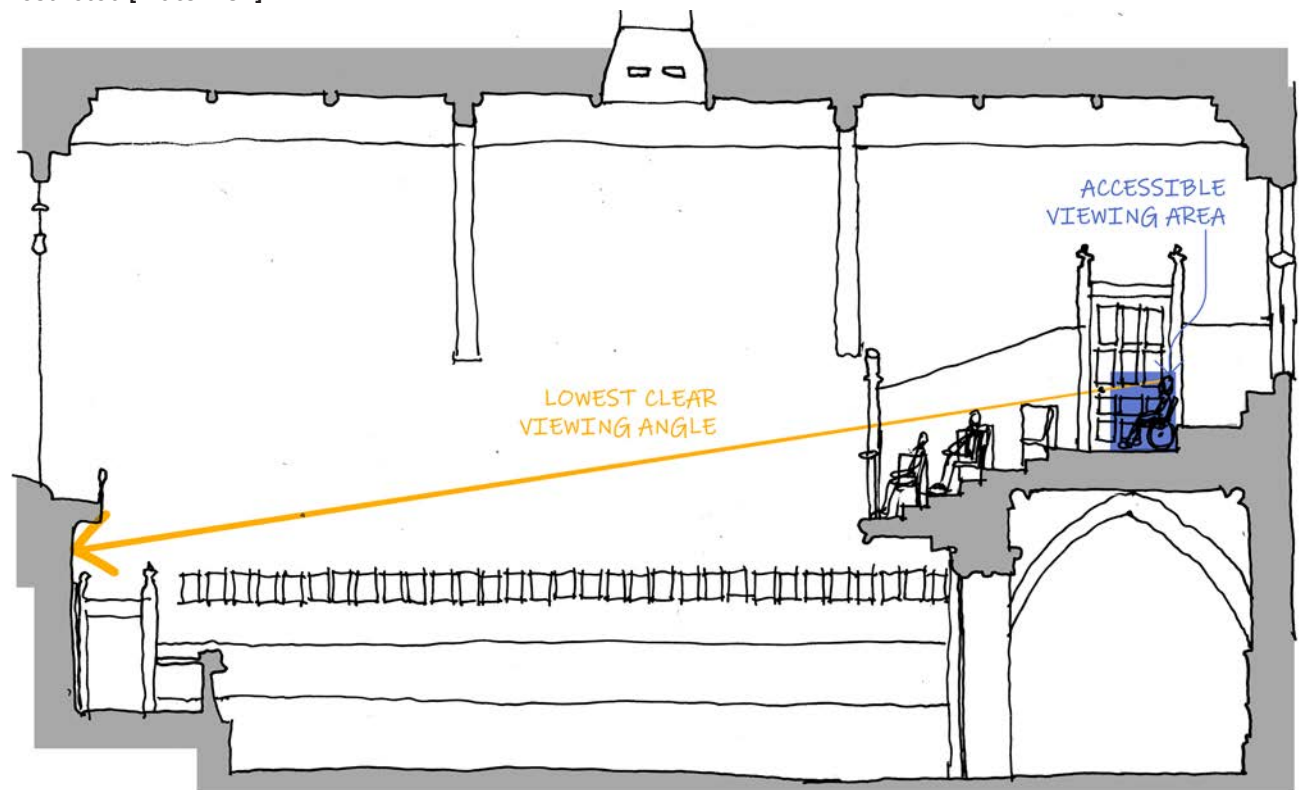
The new balustrade would allow for the removal of ties which connect the existing balustrade to the front row of pews which have reduced accessibility to them and has caused damage to these pews themselves, alongside the removal of a recently added timber board which appears to have been installed to deal with the issues of large openings in the balustrade which could allow small children or objects to fall through. The removal of this timber board would not only allow for improved visibility of the balustrade itself, but also increase its visual permeability and therefore improving views from the gallery.

To improve the currently restricted legroom to the front pews and accommodate the new balustrade the front row of pews would be adjusted to create ample uniformed leg room for all three rows of seating. The current steepness of the steps down the gallery reduces accessibility to the lower pews; to improve accessibility, additional intermediate steps would be added.

Currently there is no accessible seating provision on the public viewing gallery. To comply with The Equality Act, the creation of wheelchair accessible areas is required. Two options were reviewed for the location of these.

Option 1

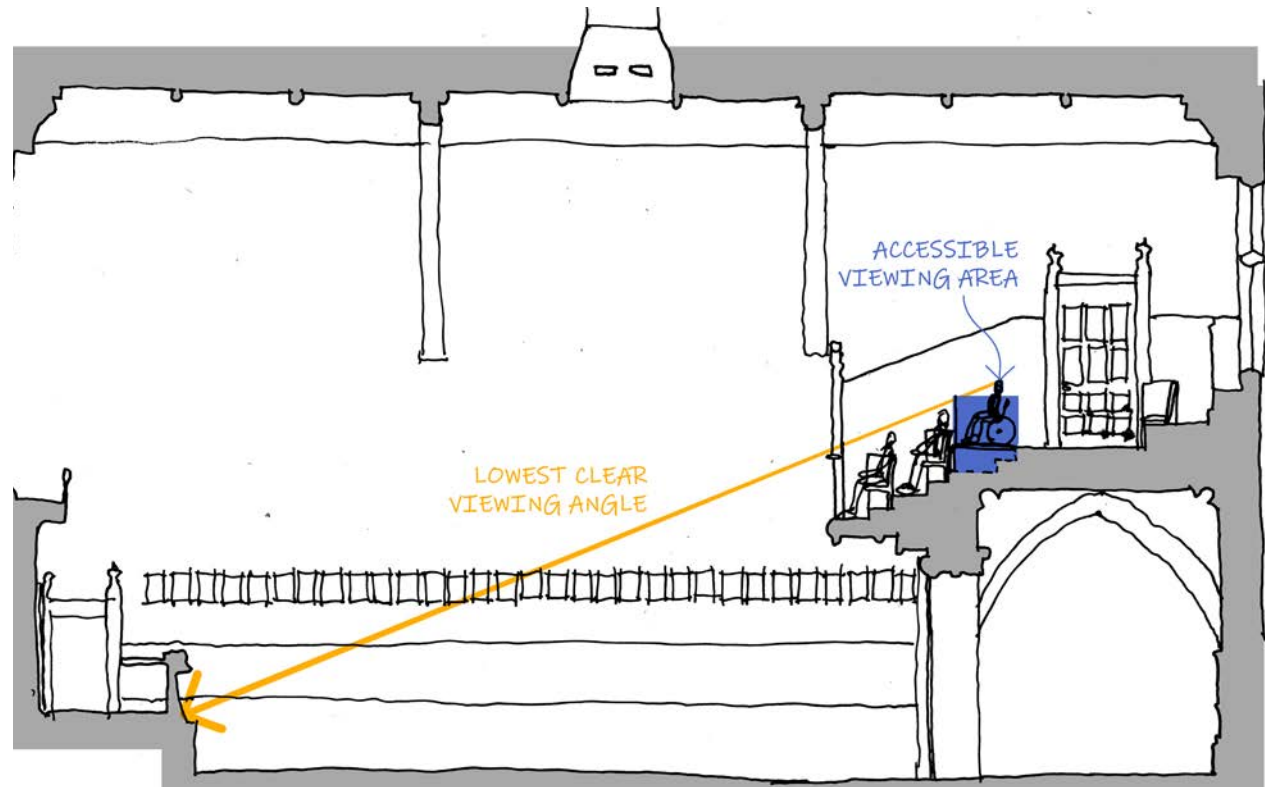
This option would require less modification to the levels of the gallery however upon review it became clear that the views from this location would be too restricted [Plate 4.34].



4.34 Council Chamber Gallery accessible seating Option 1

Option 2

Option 2 became the preferred option as it would provide significantly improved sightlines over Option 1. Some build-up of levels and guarding would be required to provide a sufficiently sized level area with adequate security. To minimise the visual obstruction and aesthetic impact of the required guarding, a frameless glass system has been proposed. The two existing pews in this area would be carefully removed and placed in storage to allow them to be returned in future if required **[Plate 4.35]**.



4.35 Council Chamber Gallery accessible seating Option 2

Significance

Highest

Impact

The proposed balustrade has sought to provide the fall protection required to enable the continued use of the gallery by the public, its original intended use and therefore beneficial to the understanding and interpretation of the building's significance. Whilst a new intervention, the glazed design proposed would form a clearly contemporary addition which could be removed at a later date and which brings with it further benefits of the removal of the ties and the boarding and improving the visibility from the Gallery to the Council Chamber below.

The further alterations proposed to make the Public Gallery accessible to all would cause some localised 'less than substantial harm', however the detailed design proposed has been carefully considered to keep this to the minimum necessary in order to make the Town Hall a building which is truly accessible for all. This is particularly important in public spaces of the highest significance in terms of engaging with the local community it was built to serve; these public benefits are considered further in the justification provided in Section 6 below.

4.2.14 Circulation Generally

As part of the proposals all circulation routes would be redefined with the use of lighting and escape signage. Signage would be detailed to match the current Phase 2 areas for continuity. A detailed fire strategy has been prepared by fire consultant Design Fire. This document has informed the upgrading of compartmentation lines, door fire ratings, new doors and task lighting.

4.2.15 Internal Finishes

The philosophy underpinning the proposals is to retain existing finishes where possible, to complement the proposed new uses. Many of the first-floor areas and Council Chamber spaces consist of decorative timber panelling at low level with upper sections of plaster with decorative cornice. Great effort would be made to repair any damage to these elements of the building and restore the Town Hall's original character. Where sections of panelling or cornice are lost, matching replacements would be fabricated. These works are outlined in more detail in the submission drawings **[Plate 4.36]**.

Hard floor coverings such as tiles and stone flags would be carefully cleaned and conserved. There appears to be a mixture of original and modern timber floor coverings, these would be recorded as part of the works.

Significance

Varied

Impact

The proposed upgrades to lighting, escape signage and compartmentation lines follow the principles established as part of the Phase 2 works and are proportionate to the substantial upgrade of the building for public use which is being undertaken and would not cause harm to significance. Otherwise, the proposals works of repair and conservation would be wholly beneficial.

GENERAL NOTES

Survey: Allow for touch test and re-survey of plaster walls and cornices with high level access and good lighting once walls have been stripped of redundant fixtures, fittings, services, linings etc.

Survey: Note - not all areas surveyed where concealed by large pieces of furniture.

Existing Plaster: Areas of plaster can appear sound but when tapped are hollow sounding indicating potential loss of key with substrate. If no works are planned in these areas the plaster will remain in situ and as found.

Allow to make good all localised plaster damage caused by screw fixings, plugs etc. as clause (NBS M20/567)

Refer to Decorations Schedule for preparation and re-finishing. Rub down and redecorate all plaster wall surfaces following completion of repairs.

Refer to Decorations Schedule for preparation and re-finishing to stone window surrounds where new metal windows inserted in Phase 2.

Refer to New Door Schedule and Repair Door Schedule for works to door sets.

Please note, drawings must be displayed/printed in colour.

KEY

WC Woodchip wall paper
A Anaglypta wall paper
L Lining Wallpaper

Where the above is noted on the elevations, the full plaster wall is covered unless stated otherwise.
Allow for completely removing (M52/350)
Include provisional sum (20%) of wall area for re-plastering to address potential defects once wall has been stripped.
Include provisional sum (100%) of re-coating wall area with EcoMortar R50 or R100 depending on substrate once exposed (M20/200).

Reinstatement of lost areas of plaster to masonry walls (M20/595)
Include provisional sum (10%) for re-plastering of any areas of failed existing plaster removed from walls.

Carefully remove added/damaged plaster back to a sound line (M20/532) and reinstate area of plaster to masonry walls (M20/595)

Localised repair of depressions, gouges and the like (NBS M20/555)

Localised repair where redundant fixtures, fittings, boxings and services have been removed. (NBS M20/567)

Repair existing water damaged plaster (NBS M20/560)

Repair top coat of plaster on sound undercoat (NBS M20/599)

Run in-situ plaster to skirting - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/110)

Run in-situ plaster cornice - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/685)

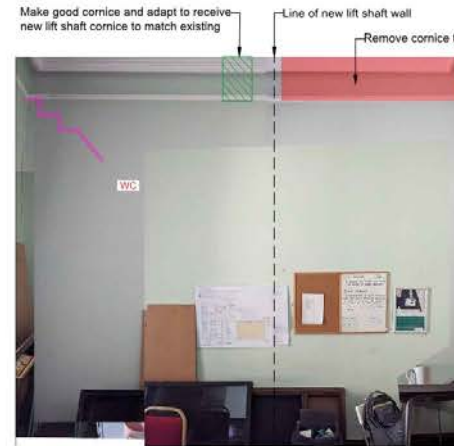
Cast fibrous plaster cornice - refer to drawing for specific works (NBS M20/680)

Repair cracks in plaster work (NBS M20/598)

Small or previously repaired cracks. Inspect further once lining paper is removed. (NBS M20/597)

Cracks to cornice refer to cornice drawing for specific works

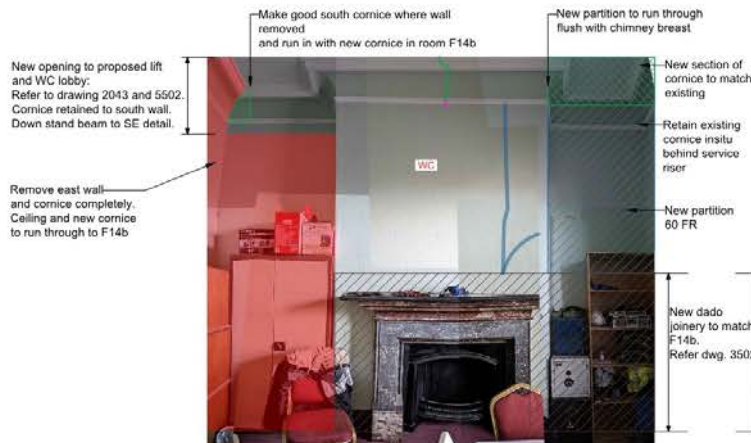
Joinery repairs - refer to drawing for specific works



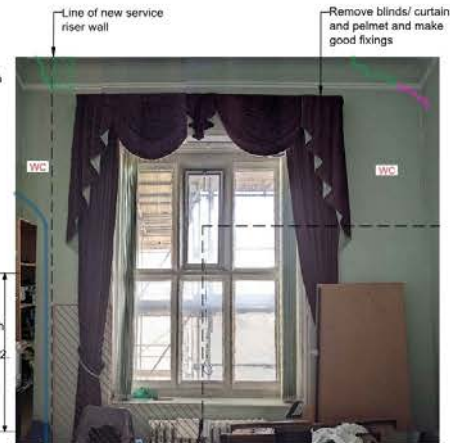
01 F14c - North Elevation
3523 1:50 @ A3



02 F14c - East Elevation
3523 1:50 @ A3

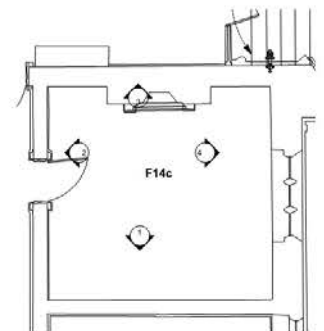


03 F14c - South Elevation
3523 1:50 @ A3



04 F14c - West Elevation
3523 1:50 @ A3

NOTES
The existing building measurement survey has been undertaken by Statline Archaeology and all references in this information is referenced directly from the associated drawings.



00 F14c - Key Plan
3523 Scale 1:100 @ A3



4.36 Typical internal repair elevations

4.2.16 Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing

Reference should be made to the drawings and information prepared by Max Fordham and included in the submission package. All existing services would be replaced, including electrics, plumbing, heating, alarms, and detections as part of the proposed works. New service routes have been carefully considered, planned, and routed through the building to minimise disruption to the existing internal fabric. Two key service riser routes are proposed. The first would run up the alcove adjacent to the chimney breast in the same rooms as the proposed lift (G14c / M13e / F14c / S14e) whilst the second would run through the vertical stack of cupboards and accessible WC off the first-floor main corridor (F11b) [Plates 4.38 and 4.39]. At basement level both would enter directly into the plant room area whilst focusing the vertical penetrations into these two stack of rooms of lower significance comparatively.

Significance

Basement: Medium – Low
Ground: Low
Mezzanine: Low
First: Medium – Low
Second: Medium - Low

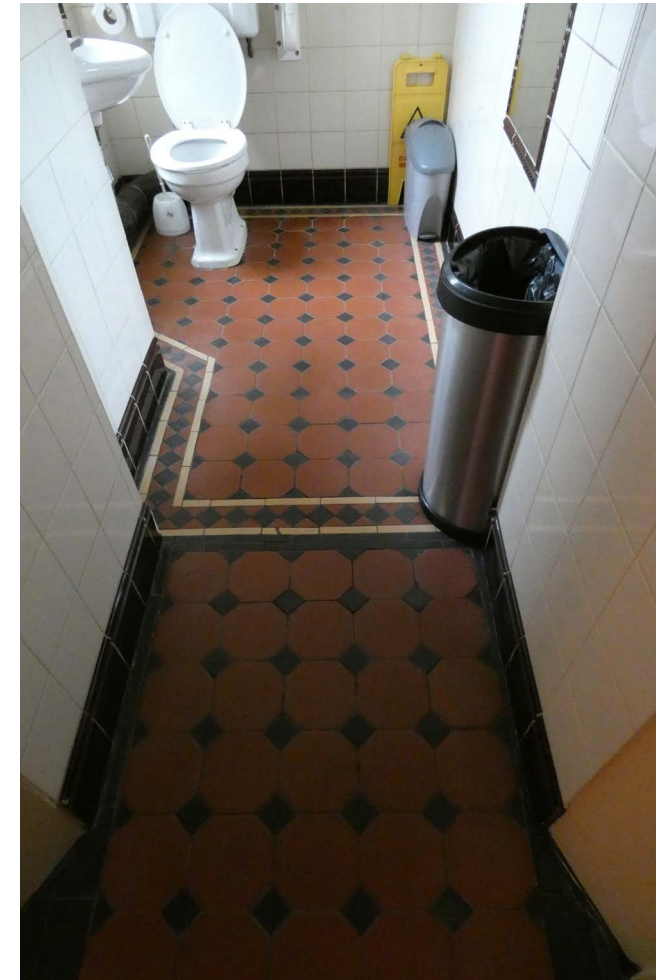
Impact

Focusing the vertical riser in the same stack of rooms as the lift and the contained stack of cupboards would allow for the impact of the required openings to be focused in these rooms of lower significance and allow for discreet service routes to be accommodated. Whilst the riser within rooms G14c / M13e / S14e would have some impact on the definition of the chimneybreast at the floor levels where visible, the impact of this the significance of the building overall would be negligible given their previous alteration. At first floor this would have a greater impact given the chimneypiece which remains within F14c); although the grandeur of this classical marble fireplace means that it would still clearly read as an original fireplace and associated chimney stack. Similarly there would be the loss of some original fabric and joinery in room F11b, however the fixings and fittings are not original and the entrance into this room has been relocated – further reducing its significance.

The impact on the overall of the significance of the Town Hall would be very minor and would prevent the need to accommodate the required services in areas of higher significance.



4.38 F14c original fireplace



4.39 F11e accessible WC at first floor



5.0 Further Design Considerations

5.0 Further Design Considerations

5.1 Access

The vision for Rochdale Town Hall is to provide improved access for all visitors, particularly those with disabilities, as part of an inter-connected series of improvements that will be delivered by the interpretation, activity plan and building design. Working in partnership together we have identified opportunities to deliver a number of access improvements. This delivery has included significant collaboration with an accessibility consultant throughout RIBA 2 and RIBA 3, to ensure Rochdale Town Hall becomes truly accessible and an exemplar in the region.

Whilst improving access for all visitors is a key objective, we recognise that some visitors to the Town Hall will have specific needs to be considered and catered for. These will include those with physical and cognitive disabilities, hearing and visual impairments. Some visitors may not have English as a first language others may have differing sensory requirements. In order to allow the Town Hall to truly stand as an “accessible” community asset, improvements to access into and within the building are required which both address issues inherent with a building designed long before the advent of modern standards whilst being sensitive to its original design.

It is proposed that level thresholds with powered opening doors (if required) are created to both entrances. Inside a new lift would offer access to all floors. Whilst there are some imitations due to intermediate changes in level at each floor, these comprise isolated back-of-house areas which are not for public access. The Council Chamber and

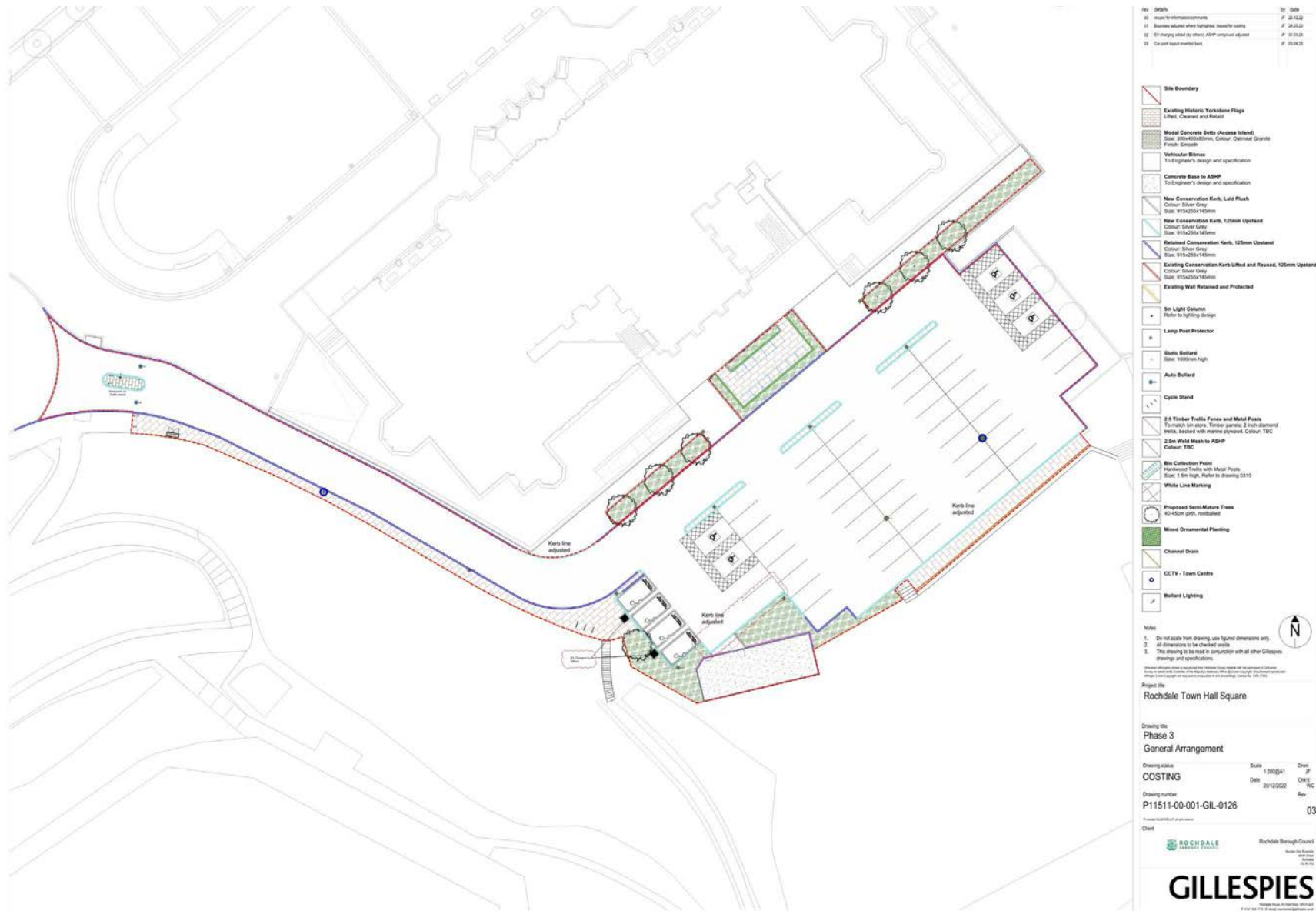
Viewing Gallery would be made fully accessible whilst accessible WC facilities as well as a Changing Places space would be created.

5.2 Sustainability

As part of the wider Phase 2 proposals, which have improved the building thermal performance and upgraded the building services to be as efficient as possible, Phase would include the introduction of an Air Source Heat Pump to supplement the existing Town Hall’s heating strategy. Further details of this are provided in the documents by Max Fordham contained within the submission pack.

5.3 Highways and Parking

A new landscaping and parking scheme is being implemented as part of the consented Phase 2 works, this includes reordering of the existing parking provision. For the most part this would remain largely unchanged and the proposals for Phase 3 would have little bearing on the design, with the exception of the Air Source Heat Pump enclosure as described above **[Plate 4.37]**.



4.37 General arrangement plan showing landscaping and parking proposals

5.4 Refuse, Recycling and Emergency Access

The existing refuse and recycling method would remain largely as existing, with improvements made to improve the current storage and transportation of waste for the building as a whole as per the consented Phase 1 and 2 works.

Access for emergency vehicles would remain and be unchanged by the new proposals, with permanent dry riser outlets being installed within the terrace walls adjacent to the east and west staircases for the fire brigade to connect into (installed during Phase 1 works). The new landscaping works being implemented alongside the Phase 2 proposals will ensure adequate provision for emergency access and all proposals have been discussed and refined in conjunction with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

5.5 Opening Hours

Rochdale Town Hall is a commercial building in the heart of the town centre and there are currently no operational restrictions on opening hours. The Town Hall has been closed from the start of Phase 1 until the end Phase 2 with part of the building remaining closed for the construction of Phase 3. The proposed opening hours following Phase 3 are being worked up by business planners as part of the project and can be discussed as part of the application process if required.

5.6 Flood Risk

The Environment Agency's indicative floodplain map shows that the site is located in Flood Zone 2 and is at "Medium" risk of flooding from the River Roch. Land in this flood zone is assessed as having an annual probability of river flooding between 0.1% and 1%. The use of the building is unchanged and only internal alterations/improvements are proposed (other than the doors and balustrade); therefore the works proposed as part of Phase 3 would not impact on the current level of flood risk. Existing flood mitigation measures and evacuation plans will need to be maintained on site. In accordance with National and Council policies, a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out and accompanies this application.



6.0 Assessment of Impact

6.0 Assessment of Impact

6.1 Impact on the Heritage Assets

As summarised at the overall introduction to this statement, the principal aims of the Town Hall project are as follows:

Continued use of the building in a manner sympathetic to its original use and function whilst allowing sensitive adaption to accommodate modern requirements

Retention of the building as a key cultural facility for the local community

Repair and restoration of the building fabric and interiors

Sustainable use and improved access

One of the most important questions that needs to be addressed when asking if it would be appropriate in heritage terms to undertake the proposals described above is: are they of overall benefit to the historic environment now and for future generations?

The overriding and compelling requirement of the proposals is that Rochdale Town Hall is repaired and restored and viably reused in a manner which would reinforce its central role in the local community in the long-term. Policy defines this as a use which is consistent with the conservation of the asset, sustaining and enhancing its significance, its setting and, in turn, the other designated assets, including Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area, the setting of surrounding listed buildings and the historic townscape more widely.

Given the changing nature of public buildings and how they are used and occupied, it is inevitable that some interventions are required to enable the principal objective of creating a truly accessible building. As part of the Phase 3 works these are largely focused on providing egalitarian access into the building through the alterations to the entrance doors, proposed lift, and accessible WCs, with the elements of greatest intervention focussed in areas of lower significance. These works are set within a scheme of works which otherwise seeks to ensure that significant fabric and the finest spaces are restored and protected. Within the West Wing, this is principally focused on the Council Chamber and Viewing Gallery, whilst alterations would also be undertaken to enable these spaces to be truly accessible to the community they serve for the first time. The proposed balustrade to the Porte Cochère and would present a visually discreet intervention which would enable its use for public address – once again better engaging with the general public in a manner akin to its original use – whilst ensuring its reversibility.

The interventions proposed have been developed on a thorough understanding of the building's significance, and – alongside the Phase 2 works - would substantially improve physical access throughout by introducing a new vertical circulation and service strategy which optimises the building's viability, whilst having a minimal impact on its historic fabric and its spatial qualities.

However, the proposed scheme goes far beyond this sum of parts. Establishing the continued and viable use of this building of unquestionable significance

to a standard of design and quality worthy of its status both internally and externally is essential, rather than allowing the building to deteriorate over time or permitting many small-scale, piecemeal and detrimental alterations to facilitate a series of failed ventures. This is the foremost and critical benefit offered by the scheme and cannot be undervalued.

Furthermore, granting the building a new enriched purpose with an increased public identity and permeability at the heart community is key to regaining its historic and communal significance - enabling improved access by the public and operationally to enable this next phase of the building's history. Not only would the works secure the conservation of the building for future generations but in manner which would allow them to access and understand its outstanding historic interest, manifest in its fabric and features, in a manner previously unknown and to the benefit of the conservation area and town centre vitality more generally.

6.2 Policy Justification of the Proposals

As explained in Section 1.2, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the Site comprises Rochdale Core Strategy 2012–2028 (adopted 2016) and retained policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2006). Decision-makers must also comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.2.1 Local Policies

Policies SP2 and SP3/R lay out the strategy for Rochdale with a focus on the delivery of regeneration to create an attractive and highly accessible town centre. Key to this ambition is the creation of distinctive local places through valuing heritage, identity, cultural assets to establish a thriving town centre and enhance the visitor economy. This is amplified in **Policy E1** which states the following objective: *'Promote and support the heritage of the town centre, particularly the Town Hall given its importance as a Grade I listed building, by maximising opportunities for tourism and culture and related economic benefits'* whilst **Policy E5** states the need to *'Promote the heritage attractions of the Town Hall'*.

The proposed scheme of works both in isolation and when viewed alongside the Phase 1, 2 and public realm works go to the very heart of these policies; securing the long-term conservation of the Grade I listed building which is so intrinsic to the identity of Rochdale whilst opening it up in a manner previously unknown so that its significance remains relevant to the community it serves. Furthermore, the new commercial and visitor offers will contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre whilst significantly enhance sustainability of the Town Hall and continued investment in its repair and upkeep.

Policy P2 relates to the protection and enhancement of character, landscape and heritage. As has been outlined above the proposals would very much meet these requirements whereby, overall, the Town Hall would be conserved and enhanced by the proposed scheme of works with works of repair a particular focus of the Phase 3 works. Although there are

instances where alteration or loss of historic fabric / plan form is proposed, this has been designed to be the absolute minimum required and focused in areas of lower significance in order to ensure that the Town Hall becomes a focus of the Rochdale identity – for its townscape role and also by allowing people to access the building and its areas of highest significance. The benefits of this are further reinforced by **Policy C8** which highlights the vital role that arts, cultural and entertainment facilities play in attracting residents and visitors and in supporting local culture and improving the borough's image.

Policy P1 seeks to improve the image of Rochdale, through requiring high quality design and by maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image. Rochdale Town Hall, is identified as one of the borough's major assets and this section goes on to set out how heritage assets can play a major part in re-enforcing the borough's character and distinctiveness. Again in this regard the ambition of the scheme of works is compelling – placing Rochdale's unique heritage at its heart, would see the enhancement of the Town Hall and in turn a reinforcement of the town's image and character.

With regard to tackling and adapting to climate change as outlined in **Policy G1** the scheme would also comply; fundamentally bring one of conserving embodied energy and sensitively adapting, within the constraints of the building's significance, by implementing sustainable and long-lasting repairs and adaptation for reduced energy consumption. Whilst the new uses which the Phase 3 works will enable as part of future tenant works follow the requirements of **Policy DM1**.

6.2.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' and, in respect of conservation areas, that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

This overarching statutory duty to preserve listed buildings and their setting and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas requires that any harm to heritage assets should be given significant importance and weight in the decision making process. Whilst it has been identified above that some limited elements of the works proposed would have a negative impact on parts of the listed building, its special architectural and historic interest overall would be preserved. This is expressed principally through the harmony of its dramatic Gothic exterior and jewel-like interior which together exemplify not only the apex of High Victorian design and suggest the beginning of the Aesthetic movement, but also represent Rochdale's specific position on trade and politics and the building is a symbol of civic pride and as such is of national significance.

These features would be retained and, indeed their significance would be better revealed by the scheme of repair and restoration works - securing the building's

ongoing viable use and granting it a new enriched life. Not only would the works secure the conservation of the building for future generations, they would enable greater social inclusion, regeneration and interpretation, allowing the wider community to access and understand its outstanding historic interest, manifest in its fabric and features, in a manner unknown before.

The interventions proposed have been developed in accordance with the philosophies and policies of the CMP and are limited to those considered absolutely necessary to help create a truly accessible building to ensure its ongoing relevance to the community it serves, to ensure maximum visitor access into the restored historic spaces and to give it a new vital purpose ensuring its principal special interest is preserved, accessed and understood.

Whilst the proposed balustrade to the Porte Cochère would form a contemporary addition, this has been designed to be entirely reversible, in harmony with the consented works to glazed the openings below and would bring significant benefit of allowing public address from this balcony which serves the Great Hall. It is considered therefore that the contribution of the exceptional quality and robust grandeur of the Town Hall makes to the fundamental character and appearance of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and would be preserved.

Securing the conservation of the building in the long-term would also preserve the important role the building plays within the conservation area as a civic and community building of exceptional interest and it is here where the scheme presents a major

enhancement. Increasing the permeability of the building and breaking down previous perceptions of exclusion would embed the building and its historic significance within the collective identity of the wider community in a manner never previously experienced. As such, opening up the building, literally and metaphorically, would in turn enrich the understanding of the historic character of the conservation area and by association,

Therefore, this comprehensive assessment of the proposals leads to the conclusion that the presumption against the grant of planning permission within the Act is not engaged and there are clear benefits to the scheme, which support the granting of consent.

6.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (2021). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'conserving and enhancing the historic environment,' the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and that, at a very high level, 'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:

- a) *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

and notes at paragraph 10:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

The proposed scheme very much accords with the policy ambitions for sustainable development; redefining the Town Hall as a central cultural and community focal point, freely accessible to visitors and providing a 'safe' space where cross-cultural activities are supported and encouraged with supporting commercial activities to create the revenue necessary to ensure its continued repair.

The multi-phased project at the Town Hall and to its wider public realm together form the key element of an ambitious overarching heritage-led town centre regeneration strategy with significant investment to public, educational, retail and civic buildings, housing and public transport. The redevelopment of the borough's unique heritage assets and public realm, and further improvements to the visitor offer, have been brought forward in recognition of the value of using heritage as a driver for the economic and social wellbeing of the town.

The increased commercial operations of the Town Hall would generate new employment opportunities whilst a commitment has been made to utilise local suppliers and maintenance and security companies. The proposed improvements to the Town Hall as a commercial venue would significantly enhance the sustainability of the Town Hall and enable continued

investment in the building and in turn the town centre securing the conservation of the historic environment in the long-term.

The scheme presents a once in generation opportunity to create a truly accessible building which is able to serve the whole community for the first time, breaking down previous barriers and bringing forward major social benefits. Furthermore, as outlined in detail above, the works of repair and restoration would very much contribute to the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment.

The requirement to conserve heritage assets in a manner *appropriate to their significance* is important and as identified in the above assessment, whilst harm may be identified to localised parts of the building, the proposed scheme seeks to conserve the significance of the listed building overall with these works focused in areas of lower significance and considered to be the minimum necessary.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- a) *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

- c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Prior to the commencement of the Phase 1 and 2 works, the function of Rochdale Town Hall as council offices has almost ceased and the building is suffering from the consequent under use including the inappropriate use of significant spaces and decaying fabric. Physical interventions are proposed to address issues inherent with a building designed long before the advent of modern standards, whilst being sensitive to its original design. The enabling of space for commercial uses (detailed design to be pursued by future tenant) would ensure the viable use of the building, which would enable its revitalised civic role in the community whilst generating the revenue required for its ongoing conservation. The associated works of repair and restoration would secure the conservation of its historic fabric and exceptional features. When considering the scale and significance of the building, there will inevitably be an impact on its historic fabric in order to make a building truly accessible to all in modern-day terms. However, whilst some of the interventions proposed may be considered to have an impact on parts of the building, they are all considered essential to achieve this key objective and ensuring its sustainable use as a community and visitor asset, and as a consequence are consistent with securing its conservation in the long-term.

Perhaps most significant in terms of what the project in its entirety would achieve more widely is the reengagement of the building with its external environment and the community it serves in an unprecedented manner both through the physical interventions proposed as well as the wider

interpretation and activity strategy and improved access to areas of high significance - better revealing the significance of the building itself as well as its contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

The increased commercial activity and job creation within the building, alongside the increased visitor footfall, would contribute to the economic vitality and vibrancy of the town centre. Rochdale has one of the best collection of significant historic buildings in the North West and the restoration of the Town Hall forms the central element of heritage led regeneration of the town which would only serve to enhance the cultural offer and the contribution this makes to creating a sense of place and character. The reinstated civic function and its focal role during public events would further uplift a sense of local community and collective identity.

With regard to potential 'harm' to the significance designated heritage assets, in paragraph 199 the framework states the following:

...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 the any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

This report demonstrates the clear and convincing justification for these proposals - which is founded in securing the viable use of the building in a manner which, with limited impact on the building, would ensure its relevance and accessibility to the community it serves in a manner not achieved previously in the

lifetime of the building. Considering the scale and sensitivities of the building this achievement should not be underplayed.

In relation to harm, the NPPF states that benefits arising from proposals, and in particular public benefits including securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset, should be part of the weighing up process. The extent of 'public benefits' required to balance any potential 'harm' to a heritage asset is dependent on whether the 'harm' is 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. For harm to be considered substantial the proposal would have to have such a serious impact that the significance of the listed building would be either vitiated altogether or very much reduced; this is clearly not the case in this instance as demonstrated in this detailed analysis outlined above. As such, should harm be identified, it can only be concluded that the proposals would cause 'less than substantial' harm. Therefore, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 200, this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal:

202. 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.

Here the proposals are exceptionally strong (both considering the Phase 3 works in isolation and as part of the full scheme), and the list of genuine, meaningful and lasting public benefits is impressive. Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Practice Guidance states that public benefits which follow from development could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress, as described in the National

Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 8). Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:

- *sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- *reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation*

The repair and restoration of Rochdale Town Hall alongside works proposed to open-up the building with enhanced public access and interpretation, would better reveal its significance (and that of the wider conservation area) and reinforce its relevance to the local community it was designed to serve for this and future generations. This is the foremost and critical benefit offered by the scheme; however the associated additional public benefits it brings are numerous:

Economic Objective

- Investment in the fabric of the building to prolong its life and give it a revitalised new purpose;
- Sensitive and high quality repair and enhancement of areas of high historic significance;
- Restoration and repurposing of key areas for future commercial use;
- Contribution of increased visitor footfall and in turn the vitality and vibrancy of Rochdale town centre;
- Increase visitor spend and dwell time in Rochdale Town Centre;
- Central role within an ambitious heritage-led town centre regeneration strategy to uplift economic wellbeing of the town;
- Generation of employment during the construction project and as part of its future use;
- Giving the Town Hall a sustainable future.

Social Objective

- Facilitating public access to a building of exceptional significance – to spaces never before accessed by the public;
- Egalitarian access and interpretation of historic and architectural importance of the building, reinforcing local identity;
- Provision of free access, seven days a week with volunteer Town Hall Ambassadors welcoming the public to the building;
- Creation of central community resource with cross-cultural activities encouraged;
- Central role within ambitious heritage-led town centre regeneration strategy, contributing to sense of place and uplifting social wellbeing;
- Contribution to local social value objectives.

Environmental Objective

- Repair and restoration of the building both externally and internally;
- The sensitive reordering of uses and circulation, to secure the long-term use and conservation of the building;
- Facilitating public access to the building to enable the appreciation of the areas of high significance;
- Improvements to the sustainability performance of the building,
- Improvements to the internal environment
- control to better conserve the important wall paintings and stained glass;
- Contribution of the restored building to the heritage-led vibrancy of Rochdale town centre;
- Central role within an ambitious heritage-led town centre regeneration strategy to uplift the historic environment and cultural offer of the town;
- Reduction of negative environmental impacts.

6.3 Conclusion

The question posed at the beginning of this section has been answered and that is that the proposals would bring overriding benefits to the historic environment.

The proposals have been assessed against the relevant national planning policies and their impact on the significance of the Grade I listed building, Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area, wider townscape and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings has been analysed. The conclusion of this report is that the proposals will lead to major and wholly positive benefits, centred on securing a continued, viable use for this building of exceptional importance, ensuring its conservation in the long-term. The further public benefits associated with the scheme would substantially outweigh any perceived 'less than substantial harm' arising from the proposals and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, the proposals are acceptable.



Appendix

Appendix I - Statutory List Description

ROCHDALE TOWN HALL

Grade: I

Date of most recent amendment: 12th February 1985

Town hall. 1866-1871, W.H Crossland; tower 1883 by A. Waterhouse. Ashlar, Westmorland slate roof.

The reception room, Lord Mayor's Parlour, the Small Exchange, members lounge and committee rooms are placed to either side of the entrance hall (or the Exchange). The grand staircase rises to the first floor Great Hall and small staircases terminate the essentially axial plan.

To the south west of the hall on the upper floor is the Council Chamber (formerly Court room) and retiring room. Gothic revival in an elaborate form with Continental antecedents. Facade of fourteen bays is asymmetrical but balanced with linking bay and tower added to left. Outer bays have triangular gables and are of three storeys, although they differ in treatment. The next two on left and three on right have an arcade across the ground floor, then tiers of plate glass windows, mostly mullioned with cusped heads, and end above a corbelled balcony in a stepped gable richly panelled with blind tracery. The central seven bays (containing the Hall) are flanked to left by a slim octagonal stair turret with stone spirelet and to right by an octagonal stair tower with tall two-light pointed windows and a steep pyramidal slate roof with cresting. The central three bays have a heavily buttressed porte-cochere supporting heraldic beasts and acting as a balcony to the Hall which is lit by tall three-light windows with geometrical tracery. Battlements behind which rises an immense slate roof with central wooden fleche.

The tower, a version of that at Manchester Town Hall rises sheer from the plinth through three stages to the broader clock stage where gables surmount each face flanked by pinnacles. Above this a short octagonal lantern carries a stone spire. The whole facade is richly carved with naturalistic foliage in the style of Southwell Minster. The main feature of each return wall is a tall semi-octagonal stair tower with lead windows and pyramidal slate roofs.

The rear is comparatively plain, but the centre is occupied by the great stair hall of three bays with weathered buttresses and very tall three-light windows, roofed separately. The entrance hall is 5x3 bays with quadripartite red and white stone vaulting, fine carved capitals of Southwell Minster type carved by Thomas Earp, polished granite columns and Minton floor tiles; it forms an undercroft to the hall and was intended as an Exchange. The reception room has three pierced diaphragm arches, two Tudor arched fireplaces with castellated mantles and heraldic panels, and wall paintings depicting the various machines used in textiles. The Lord Mayor's Parlour has a similar fireplace, chamfered beams carried on corbels representing the sections of an orchestra, William Morris stained glass depicting the seasons and months of the year, and wall paintings.

The members lounge has a vaulted ceiling carried on granite corner columns. The Small Exchange has the industries of Rochdale represented in the stained glass and ceiling paintings. The vaulted stair hall has one flight which returns in two with clustered columns rising between the flights. The heavy marble handrail rests on a stone arcade, the upper landings are supported on flying ribs and the stained glass represents the towns with which Rochdale traded. The Great Hall has

a painted timber roof with angelic hammer beams: Henry Holiday's wall painting of 1870 depicts King John signing the Magna Carta, the stained glass is by Bayne of Heaton But and Bayne and includes two rose windows to the gables. A large organ is housed in three pointed arches. The Council Chamber and Court Room are elaborately decorated with carved timber fittings. Most rooms have original painted wall pattern designs by Best of Rochdale and oak linenfold panelling of varying designs.

The design was selected by competition in 1864 and is an important early departure from High Victorian heaviness.

The Builder 7:4:66, 7:10:71, and 12.2.76. B.o.E.
Listing NGR: SD8958413253

Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 16, 66 and 72(l) of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

[...] in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall 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.

Similarly, section 66 of the above Act states that:

In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall 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.

Similarly, section 72(l) of the above Act states that:

[...] with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Local Policy

Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy (2016)

Policy SD1 - Delivering sustainable development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted

Policy SP3/R - The Strategy for Rochdale

The priorities for Rochdale are to:

Transform Rochdale town centre (Policies SO1,SO2,SO3,SO4,SO5) by:

- Promoting opportunities to improve and create distinctive local places through in the town centre through excellent design of buildings and the public realm, valuing heritage, identity, cultural assets, the River Roch and the natural environment (Policies E1,P1,P3,T1); and
- Delivering the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding areas in line with the adopted Rochdale Town Centre Masterplan or Rochdale Town Centre SPD (Policies E1 & P1).

Policy P1 - Improving image

We will require high quality design in all new developments, and this will be particularly important in the following areas, which are crucial to the image of the borough:

4. Town centres; and
5. Prominent sites, regeneration areas and key visitor attractions.

We will ensure new development improves the image of the borough by:

- a. Requiring design which is of a high standard, demonstrating innovation and originality;
- d. Promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image.

Policy P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

e. Conserving and enhancing townscape character.

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

a. Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and nonstatutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:

- i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;
- ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;

b. Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;

c. Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and

d. Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

Policy P3 - Improving design of new development

We will require all new developments, including associated landscaping, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. The following design principles should be adhered to wherever relevant:

- Enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general;
- Ensure that buildings contribute positively to the townscape, and are well proportioned;
- Ensure that the intended functions of buildings and spaces are easily understood, and their entrances appropriately located and visible;
- Minimise impact upon the environment, and help adapt to the impacts of climate change, including by re-using existing buildings and materials (maximising the benefits of existing embodied energy) and utilising sustainable drainage (Policies G1 and G2);
- Design buildings and spaces so that quality and appearance can be maintained over time.

All developments should have regard to the principles outlined in the following documents (or equivalent documents which replace them), which set out in detail the Council's design expectations for new development:

- Urban Design Guides SPDs, September 2007
 - o Urban Design Guide SPD, September 2007;

Design and access statements and design briefs must include demonstration of how these design principles have been taken into account in the design of development proposals.

Policy G1 - Tackling and adapting to climate change

We will address climate change and ensure growth does not increase CO2 emissions by:

- Promoting the efficient re-use of buildings, especially those of heritage value, and the recycling of construction waste.

Policy DM1 - General development requirements

All development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- a. Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area.

Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan (2006)

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 2006 and remains extant.

Policy G/BE/9 (Part One Policy) - Conservation of the built heritage

Priority will be given to the practical conservation and enhancement of those features of the built environment which are the most valuable, in particular: conservation areas; listed buildings and their settings; scheduled ancient monuments; parks and gardens of special historic interest; and archaeological remains. Such buildings, areas and features of architectural and historic merit will be protected from adverse development or demolition and positive measures will be taken or supported, wherever possible, to facilitate their continued upkeep and beneficial use. Particular emphasis will be placed on securing new uses for existing buildings to ensure their future, and on promoting conservation activities which provide a stimulus for the regeneration of town centres, older urban and rural areas, including historic and cultural landscapes.

Policy BE/10 - Development affecting archaeological sites and Ancient Monuments

Developers must take full account of the presence of known Ancient Monuments and sites of archaeological importance and their settings in proposals. Planning permission will be refused where developers do not sympathetically accommodate such structures or remains, particularly where the proposal has a significant effect on the site itself or its setting.

Proposals should accommodate the physical preservation of archaeological features in situ. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, and where the site is of lesser significance, archaeological excavation to secure the preservation of features either on or off site may be appropriate to enable preservation by record. In such cases, the applicant may be required to carry out a programme

of proper recording of archaeological evidence before development takes place. Such a programme could be secured by planning conditions or through a Section 106 obligation negotiated with the applicant. In all cases there should be a full and appropriate prior evaluation of the archaeological resource detailing its value, the likely impact of proposals and mitigation as required.

BE/11 - Protection of locally important buildings and features of architectural and historic interest

The Council will permit development proposals that do not adversely affect buildings and features which are of local interest and which contribute to the character of an area and/or are important in townscape terms.

BE/13 - Changes of use to listed buildings

Changes of use to Listed Buildings will be permitted where:-

- a) An appropriate and sympathetic balance is struck between the effect of changes on the special interest of the Listed Building and the viability of any proposed use; and
- b) A satisfactory assessment of the viability and impact of the proposal compared to alternative possible uses is carried out.

BE/14 - Alterations and extensions to listed buildings

Development proposals affecting the character of a Listed Building must not harm the architectural value or historic interest of the host building, its curtilage and the surrounding area. In particular, applications for Listed Building Consent involving alterations and extensions (and repairs where materials and/or techniques differ from the original) will need to demonstrate, through the provision of detailed plans, that:-

- a) Account has been taken of the scale and proportions of the host building, and its relationship to other buildings and their setting;
- b) Sympathetic and high quality materials are used;
- c) Internal spaces, features and fixtures are retained; and
- d) Appropriate detailing is employed throughout, particularly the arrangement and design of fenestration and appropriate roof forms.

In cases where Listed Building Consent for alteration or extension is given, and where it is appropriate to record the character of the building before works commence, a condition may be attached to such consent, or a legal agreement sought with the applicant relating to a proper programme of recording.

BE/18 - Changes of use to buildings in Conservation Areas

Proposals for the change of use of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that:-

- a) The new use is compatible with adjoining uses;
- b) Conversion and adaptation respects the architectural and historic interest of the buildings and their settings; and
- c) The provisions of Policy BE/17 "New Development Affecting Conservation Areas" are satisfied.

BE/19 - Protection of parks and gardens of special historic interest

Development proposals which would result in the loss of, or cause harm to the historic character, structure or setting of any part of a designated historic park or garden will not be permitted.

Regional Policy

Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan Document – Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan (2021)

The Joint Development Plan Document was adopted by the nine districts of Greater Manchester in August 2021.

Policy JP-P 1 - Sustainable Places

We aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the following key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be consistent with:

1. Distinctive, with a clear identity that:

- A. Responds to the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture;
- B. Enables a clear understanding of how the place has developed; and
- C. Respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used.

2. Visually stimulating, creating interesting and imaginative environments which raise the human spirit through the use of green space, public art and quality design

6. Durable, being built to last and using robust materials that reflect local character, weather well and are easily maintained

7. Resource-efficient with:

- A. A low carbon footprint;
- B. Efficient use of land;
- C. Minimised use of new materials;
- D. High levels of recycling

12. Legible, being easy to understand and navigate, with the protection and enhancement of key views and new development well-integrated into the place

Policy JP-P 2 - Heritage

Through this Plan we will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance its historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place.

Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for safeguarding and enhancing in the future, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings

or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive integration of our heritage by:

- 1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;
- 2. Utilising the heritage significance of a site or area in the planning and design process, providing opportunities for interpretation and local engagement;
- 3. Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;
- 4. Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing.

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic value.

Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area should conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal

as making a positive contribution to the area. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Development proposals should identify assets of archaeological interest and use this information to avoid harm or minimise it through design and appropriate mitigation.

Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.

National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (July 2021). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and that, at a very high level, 'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

and notes at paragraph 10:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

With regard to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

With regard to potential 'harm' to the significance designated heritage asset, in paragraph 199 the framework states the following:

...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.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 200 that:

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. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm' to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset paragraph 201 of the NPPF states that:

...local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use

With regard to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 202 of the NPPF states the following;

202. 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.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and world heritage sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 206 states that:

... Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 207, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 200 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 201, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published on 23 July 2019 to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning system. It includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The relevant guidance is as follows:

Paragraph 2: What is meant by the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that

the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost
- interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past; and
- make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 199)

Paragraph 6: What is "significance"?

'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design,

construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

- **historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.

Paragraph 7: Why is 'significance' important in decision-taking?

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Paragraph 13: What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Paragraph 15: What is the optimum viable use for a heritage asset and how is it taken into account in planning decisions?

The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation.

By their nature, some heritage assets have limited or even no economic end use. A scheduled monument in a rural area may preclude any use of the land other than as a pasture, whereas a listed building may potentially have a variety of alternative uses such as residential, commercial and leisure.

In a small number of cases a heritage asset may be capable of active use in theory but be so important and sensitive to change that alterations to accommodate a viable use would lead to an unacceptable loss of significance.

It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also for the future conservation of the asset: a series of failed ventures could result in a number of unnecessary harmful changes being made to the asset.

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner, subject of course to obtaining any necessary consents.

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. The policy on addressing substantial and less than substantial harm is set out in paragraphs 199-203 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 18: How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 199-203) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works

to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms 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). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 200).

Paragraph 20: What is meant by the term public benefits?

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (March 2015)

Historic England: Conservation Principles and Assessment (2008)

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