

A photograph of Rochdale Town Hall, a large, ornate Gothic Revival building made of dark stone. It features multiple spires, arched windows, and a prominent clock tower on the left. The building is set against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are flower beds with red and white flowers, and a blue flag flies on a tall pole. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

**Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Phase 3
(Amendments submission)**

Application: Amendments and additional proposals to
23-00590-FUL & 23-00591-LBC
following progression of works on site

Rochdale Town Hall

December 2024



Chester Office

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1.0 Introduction and Background

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 proposals have been developed collaboratively with our client Rochdale Development Agency and the project consultant team, along with specialist surveyors and contractors, which has hugely strengthened our understanding of Rochdale Town Hall and its context.

Planning and Listed Building Consent was granted for Phase 3 of the scheme in September 2023 with the following description:

Phase III restoration and refurbishment works to Rochdale Town Hall, continuation of Phase II works (approved 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC); to include roof repairs and improvements, modification of below ground drainage, installation of an air source heat pump at the rear carpark, internal alterations, replacement of MEP services throughout the building, accessibility improvements throughout the building, addition of a lift to all floors, and conservation works to heritage rooms

Phase 3 works on site commenced in September 2023. As might be expected, opening-up led to a better understanding of the building, and necessitated some design changes in the interest of the building.

This report is an update on the Phase 3 Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023 which accompanied the earlier consented applications, and has been prepared to accompany an application for consent for amendments to the earlier consents and additional proposals.

To avoid repeat, sections of the earlier reports which set out the context have not been included in this update. Reference should be made to Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023 and Rochdale Town Hall Conservation Management Plan May 2020 reports for the history of the site, analysis of significance, and legislative background and description of the existing site and building.

Section 6 of this updated report makes reference to the current consented proposals, describes the amendments and additional proposals, and demonstrates their appropriateness. New and updated drawings illustrate the amendments and additional proposals.

The proposals take account of comments arising from meetings both on site and via email / virtual meetings with Conservation Officer Catherine Fenghour. As the building was a live construction site the amendments and additional work have carried out in order to maintain the progress of the works.

1.1.1 Summary of Proposals

Refer to Section 1.3 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

1.1.2 Summary of Phasing

Refer to Section 1.1 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

2.0 The Site and its Legal Status

Refer to Section 1.3 The Building, its Legal Status and Policy Context, of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

3.0 Assessment of Significance and Conservation Philosophy

3.1 Assessment of Significance

Refer to Section 2 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

3.2 Conservation Management Plan

Refer to Conservation Management Plan submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application

3.3 Conservation Philosophy

Refer to Section 3 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application

3.4 Heritage Impact Assessment

Refer to Section 6 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

The 'Tracker - Updates During On Site Works - Rochdale Town Hall' provides a detailed assessment of the impact on significance of the proposals subject of this application. Whilst they would predominantly have a neutral impact when considered against the approved scheme of works; there are instances of both positive and negative impacts. The requirement for the changes as the project developed however were central to ensuring the successful implementation of the scheme. Key to this success is allowing continued use of the building in a manner sympathetic to its original use and function whilst allowing sensitive adaption to accommodate modern requirements, together with repairing and restoring areas of higher significance, this is in accordance with the policies outlined in the CMP and centres on the four key strands of the adopted Conservation Philosophy.

The proposals subject of this application 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. It is considered that where an increased impact has been identified this is balanced by the positive enhancements and must be considered against the wider scheme of works of which they form part. The restoration of Rochdale Town Hall 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 and meeting the requirements of the Local Plan and the tests for suitable development as outlined in the NPPF.

4.0 Project Brief

Refer to Section 1.3 Summary of Project Brief and Section 4.1 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

5.0 Design Statement

5.1 Overarching Proposal

Refer to Section 1 & 4 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

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 the Conservation Philosophy.

The works covered in this application, amending the previous Phase 3 application can be summarised in the following:

- Revised MEP routing through basement, required to resolve buildability constraints.
- Lift positioning update, required to resolve construction safety and buildability constraints.
- Rotation of WC arrangement at first floor and creation of opening in wall to Mayors Back Of House. Required due to increase in footprint of lift at first floor and need to improve toilet provision at this floor. It is important to note that the provision of WCs is still insufficient in accordance with Building Regs, and a reduction of the proposed number of WCs was not acceptable. It is also important to note that historic division is evident in the pattern of the uncovered tiles within the Mayor's BOH area and this corresponds with the newly proposed partition wall.
- Addition of 'Riser 3' beside lift to serve toilets
- Addition of boxing in to services in Stair 10 (South stair). Heating pipework to run vertically through this area as this reduces the impact on flagged floor in these areas.
- Alterations to new partitions and door proposals, required for fire safety reasons.
- Alteration to ceiling proposals, to make safe existing ceilings following further on site investigations and reduce impact of service runs on existing lath and plaster ceilings and flagged floor above.
- Alterations to proposed floor finishes. Updated following opening up revealing existing floor finishes below modern carpets and due to updates to intended layout.
- Wall Decorations. Refer to Report - RTH - Internal Wall Finishes
- Widening of Mezzanine store opening, required to allow continued use and function of the building.
- Window film to out of scope areas, temporarily required to improve external appearance of the building until remaining areas of the building can be restored and brought back into use.
- Minor updates to Green Room Vanity unit design.
- Council Chamber Gallery structural reinforcement. Required due to discovery that existing structure was insufficient to accommodate continued use for its intended function. The proposed structural alterations allow the continued use of this part of the building.
- Mayor Parlor floor levelling. Required to allow floor to be strengthened to continue to serve the space's intended purpose.
- Mayor Parlor bench modifications. Required to allow sufficient heating output to achieve modern standards of comfort.
- Infilling redundant duct in Council Chamber wall behind panelling. Required to protect structural and fire safety of the building.
- Revised Council Chamber platform lift position and revised Dais design due to lift position alteration. Required due to challenges with spatial requirements and clashes with existing panelling in original location. Improvement of accessibility of dais - manoeuvring onto and off the platform lift.
- Clarification of AV proposals for the council Chamber following completion of specialist design.
- Upper level of 4no. ducts removed to F15b. Previous modern intervention no longer required.
- Porte Cochere balcony decking reduced to central bay only - improvement over consented.
- Fire proofing works to organ under croft in F15d. Required to reduce impact of AV equipment on Council Chamber and provide fire protection.
- Use of second floor gallery stair S13c room for AV equipment. Required to reduce impact of AV equipment on Council Chamber and provide fire protection.
- Works to S11a balustrade. Improvement – removal of non-original alteration causing harm to historic screen partition.
- Second floor WCs layout minor updates to improve drainage routes. Frosted privacy film added to windows falling within female wc cubicle.
- Change of council chamber ventilation design. To add new vent to side through roof rather than increasing height of existing rooftop vent. Minimising externally visible changes

6.0 Description of the Proposals

Refer to Section 4 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

AND

Refer to attached 'Tracker - Updates During On Site Works - Rochdale Town Hall'

The works covered in this amendment application are shown on supporting documents and the Tracker, with the justification and whether already discussed with Conservation Officer.

6.1 Sustainable Approach

Refer to Section 5.2 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

7.0 Access Statement

Refer to Section 5.1 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

8.0 Planning Statement

Refer to Section 6.2 of the earlier Heritage, Design and Access Statement, June 2023, submitted with consented 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC application.

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