

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 gables, and a series of arched windows. Several flags are flying in front of the building. The foreground shows a street with parked cars and a clear blue sky.

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

The North's Greatest 'Cathedral of Commerce'

Rochdale Town Hall: Phase 1 Works

Planning, Design and Access Statement for Rochdale Development Agency

May 2020



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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.

1.1.1 Summary of Proposals

Phase 1 has been developed to include a series of works, which would prepare the building for the main NLHF funded project (Phase 2). These enabling works include internal strip-out, asbestos removal, structural works, installation of dry risers and a trial replacement window. Exposing original fabric and volumes would enhance the understanding of the building to inform the Phase 2 technical design work, reducing the risk of unknowns to the NLHF funded works. This would also maximise the opportunity to integrate and conceal services without impact on the significance of the building. The scope of works is focused largely internally; predominantly in the centre and east of the building.

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.

1.1.2 Summary of Phasing

Following the refinement of the proposals and commissioning of specialist surveys and opening up works, the overall refurbishment project has been divided into three phases of works as follows:

- Phase 1: the primary objective of Phase 1 proposals has been to reduce risks to Phase 2 Heritage Funded works and largely comprise strip-out works, structural openings and preparatory works funded by RBC.
- Phase 2: the main body of the NLHF funded works for the repair and restoration of the Town Hall, including surrounding terracing.
- Phase 3: the potential later commercial re-use phase of works following delivery of Phase 2.

The phasing strategy is shown in the diagram on the following page.

This **Planning, Design and Access Statement** and suite of supporting documents have been prepared to support the applications for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent for **Phase 1** 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 developed, but do not form part of this application.

Sections 1-6 of this statement outlines the site and its significance, sets out the aims of the project and describes the design process and proposals, it should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and reports, which are submitted as part of this application. A full assessment of the scheme

can be found within the Heritage Impact Assessment. Further supporting information can be found in the CMP, which has informed the development of the proposals for the building and its surrounding environs, the key principles of which are summarised in the Conservation Philosophy - contained at **Section 4** of this report. The CMP contains a comprehensive illustrated historic background, detailed building analysis and room-by-room gazetteer; its purpose is summarised in **Section 4** and the full document can be found along with the Specialist Heritage Reports, accompanying this application.

Section 7 of this statement sets out the planning history of the building, the technical consultation carried out and the planning context in relation to these proposals.

1.2 Consultants

Donald Insall Associates:

Lead Consultants, Architects and Heritage Building Consultants

Price & Myers:

Structural and Civil Engineers

Max Fordham:

MEP Engineers

Redman Design:

Exhibition Designers

Gillespies:

Landscape Architects

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

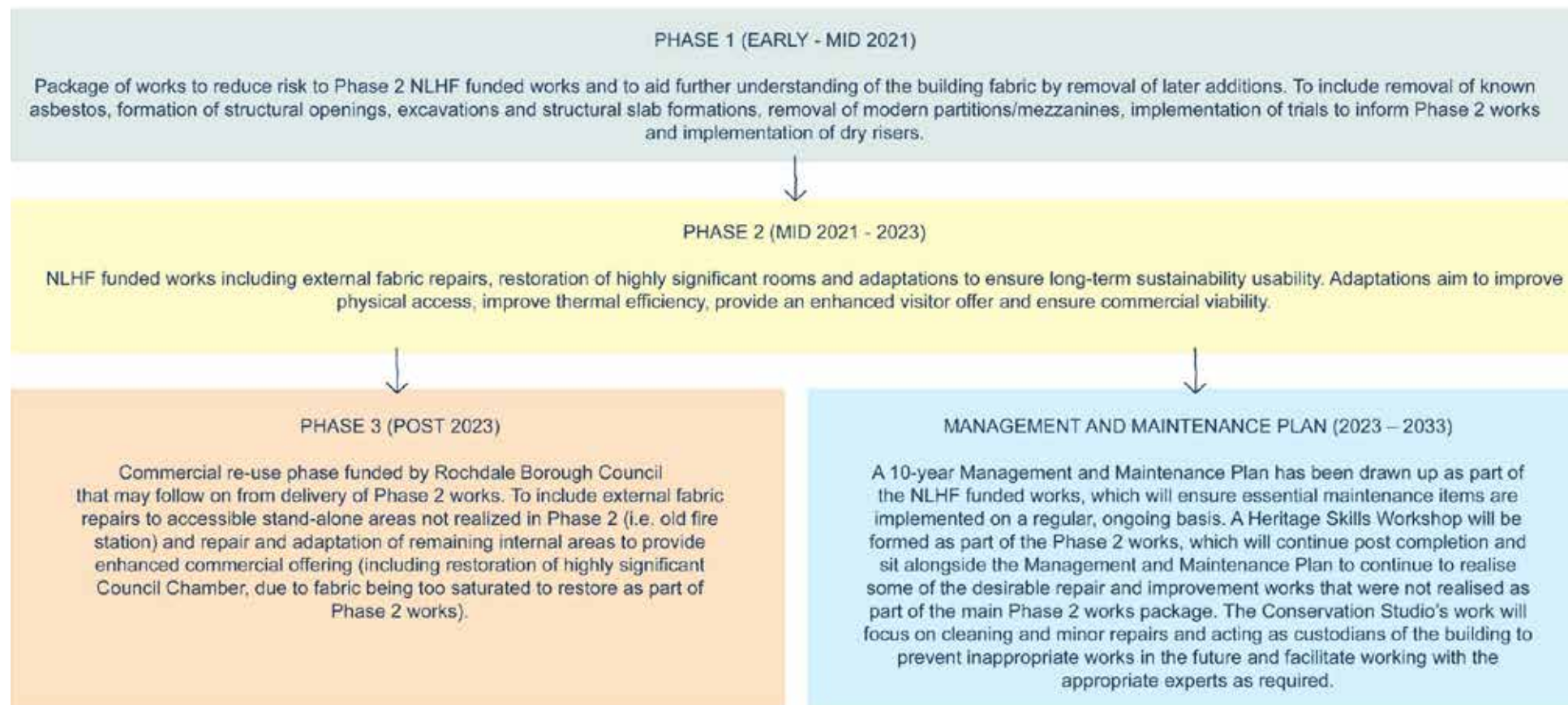
**PRICE &
MYERS**

MAX FORDHAM

Redman Design

GILLESPIES

Masterplanning | Landscape Architecture | Urban Design



Above: Phasing Strategy

2.0 The Site and its Legal Status

2.1 Location and Address

Rochdale is a town in Greater Manchester, north-east of Manchester city centre, at the foothills of the South Pennines. The site address is: Rochdale Town Hall. The Esplanade, Rochdale, OL16 1AB. The building subject to this application is approximately 2.200sqm and is bounded by land owned by Rochdale Borough Council on all sides, as shown on the site location plan.

2.1.1 The site is flanked by:

North: Public highway

East: Public highway / Church

South: Public highway / Church

West: Public highway / commercial property.

The Town Hall is currently occupied and operated by Rochdale Borough Council. The building is in D1 use, with ancillary uses including: café, offices and events space. However a significant part of the building is given over to storage, is closed to public access and is in disrepair. The registry office is located on the west side of the building, but alterations here do not form part of this phase of works.

2.2 Summary of Legal Status

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. Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent; development in conservation areas or within the setting of a listed building or conservation area requires local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage.

2.3 Statutory List Description

The statutory list description of Rochdale Town Hall is as follows:

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

3.0 Summary Assessment of Significance and Conservation Philosophy

3.1 Summary Assessment of Significance

A detailed assessment of significance with guidance on the relative significance of elements of fabric and plan form and the extent to which these elements may be altered is included in Section 2 of the Heritage Impact Assessment, with accompanying significance plans. The following paragraphs are a summary explaining why the listed building and the conservation area are considered of nationally-important architectural and historical interest.

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

Key Values



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.

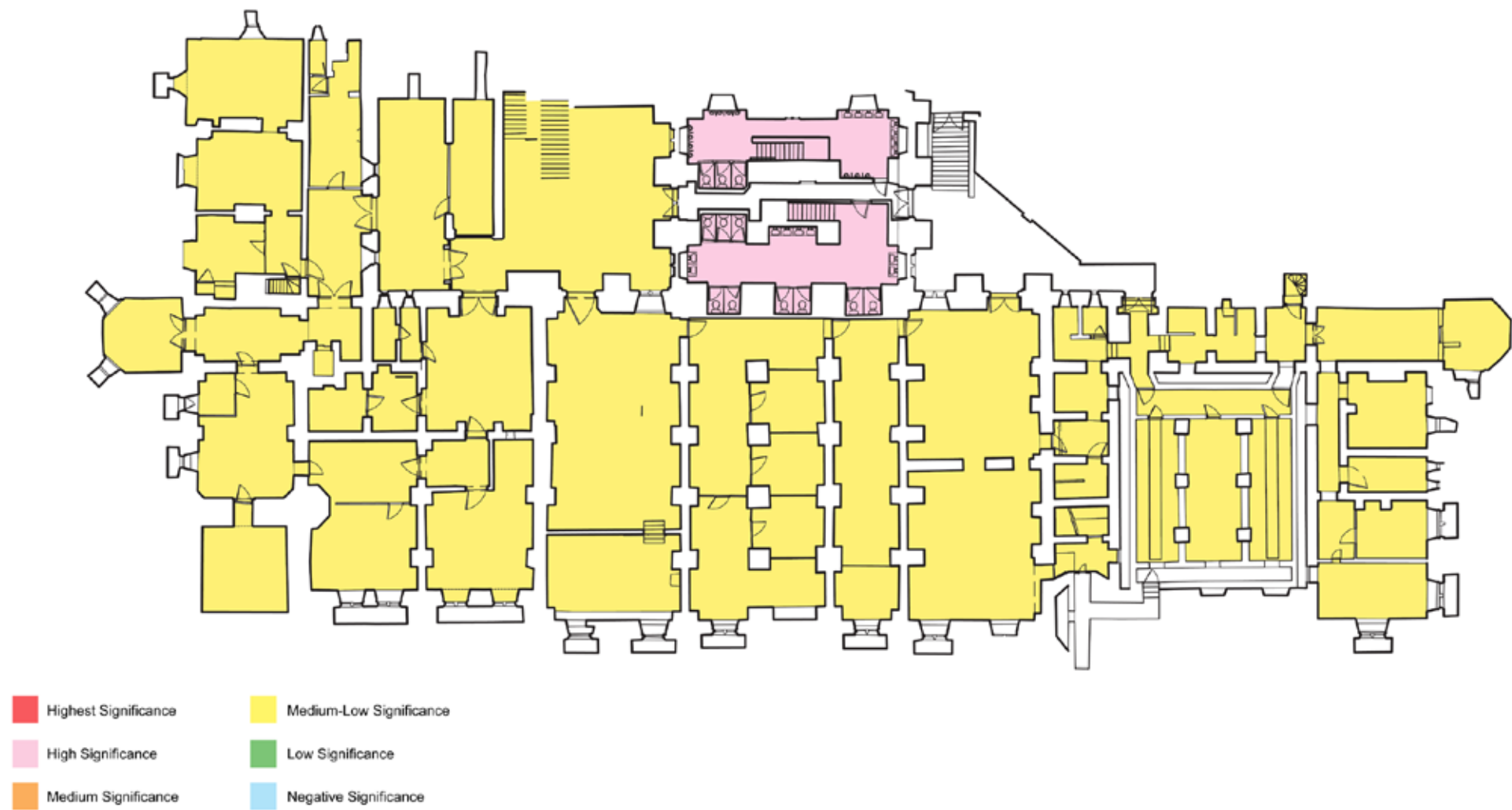
Internally the surviving rooms with intact schemes are probably unmatched as examples of Victorian polychrome decorated interiors, with one of the most elaborate examples of pictorial and heraldic decoration of this era. The building has been in continuous public use for over 140 years and has a high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

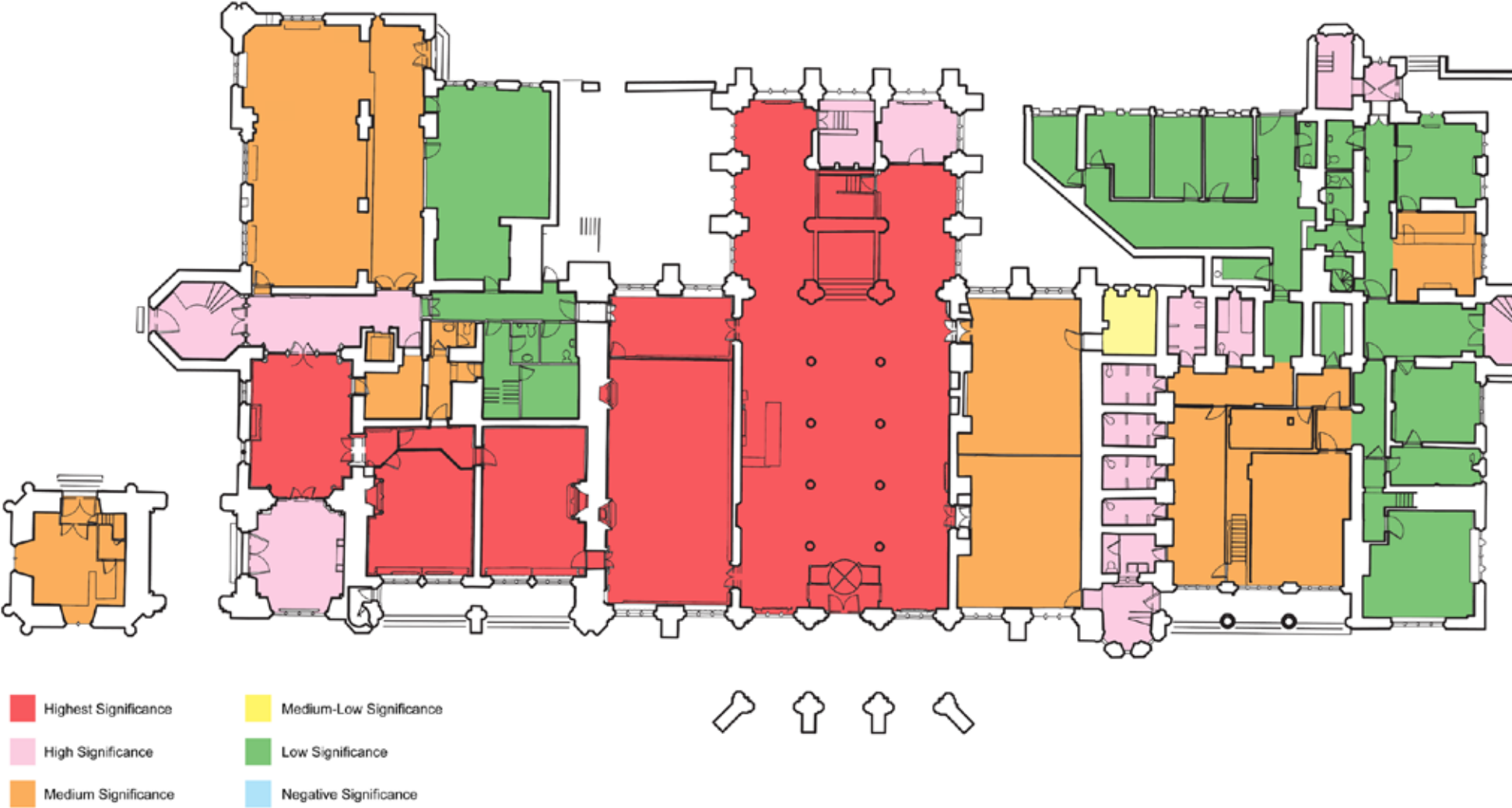
The Town Hall is the most significant building in the conservation area, lying on an island site it forms a major landmark on the Esplanade and dominates

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. The following pages are taken from the CMP and visually indicate the significance of the building and its setting.

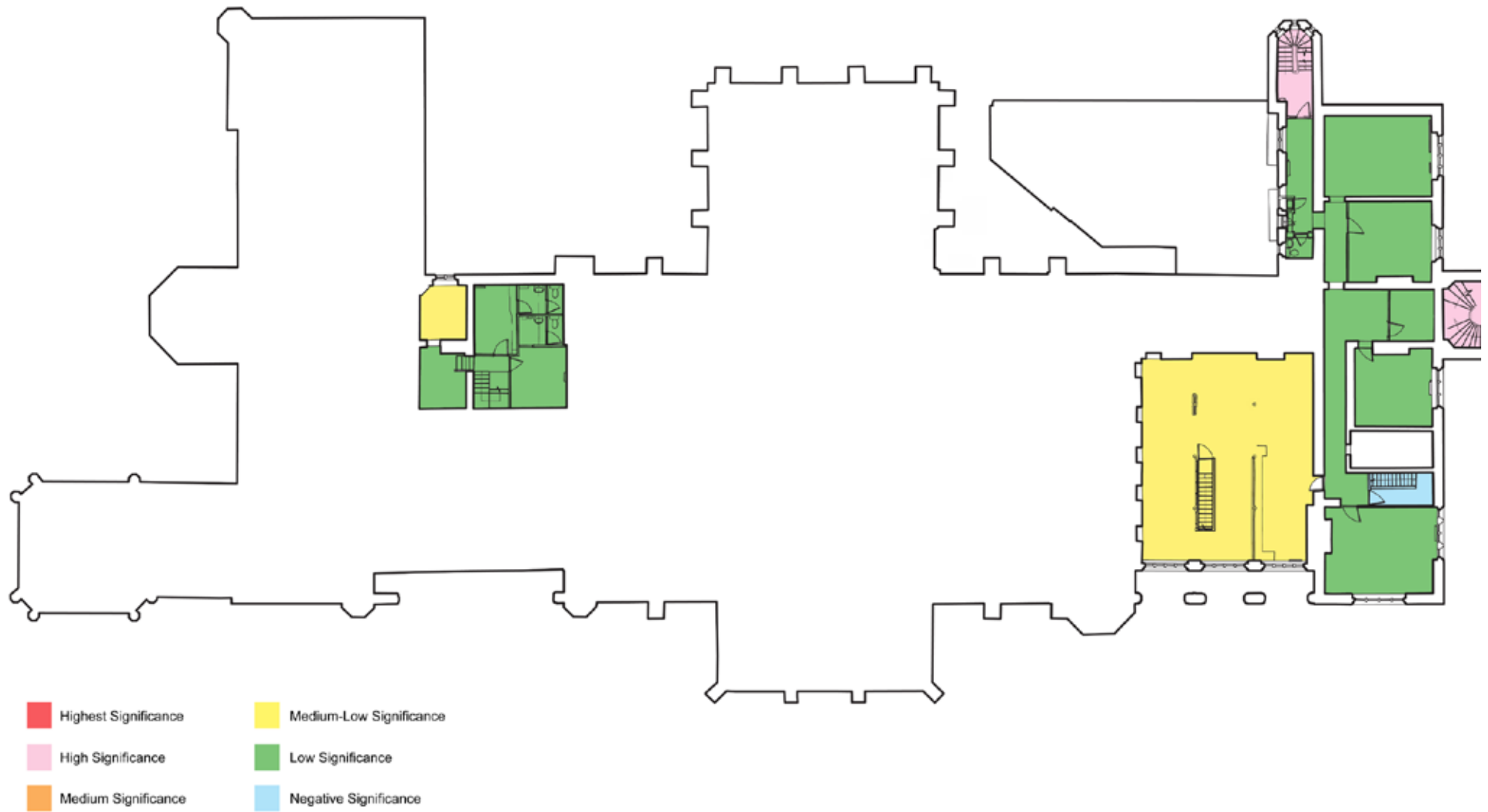
Basement Significance



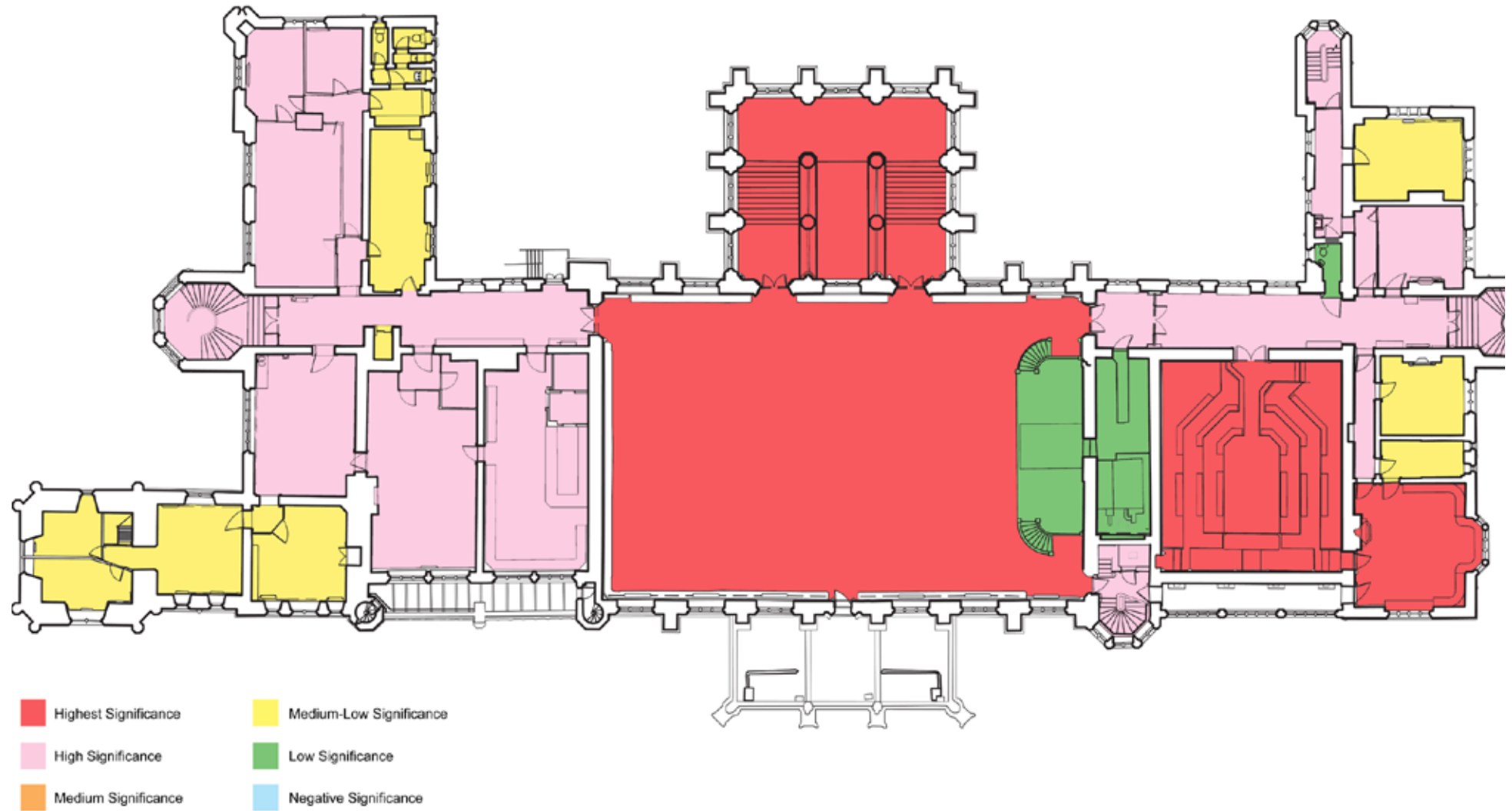
Ground Floor Significance



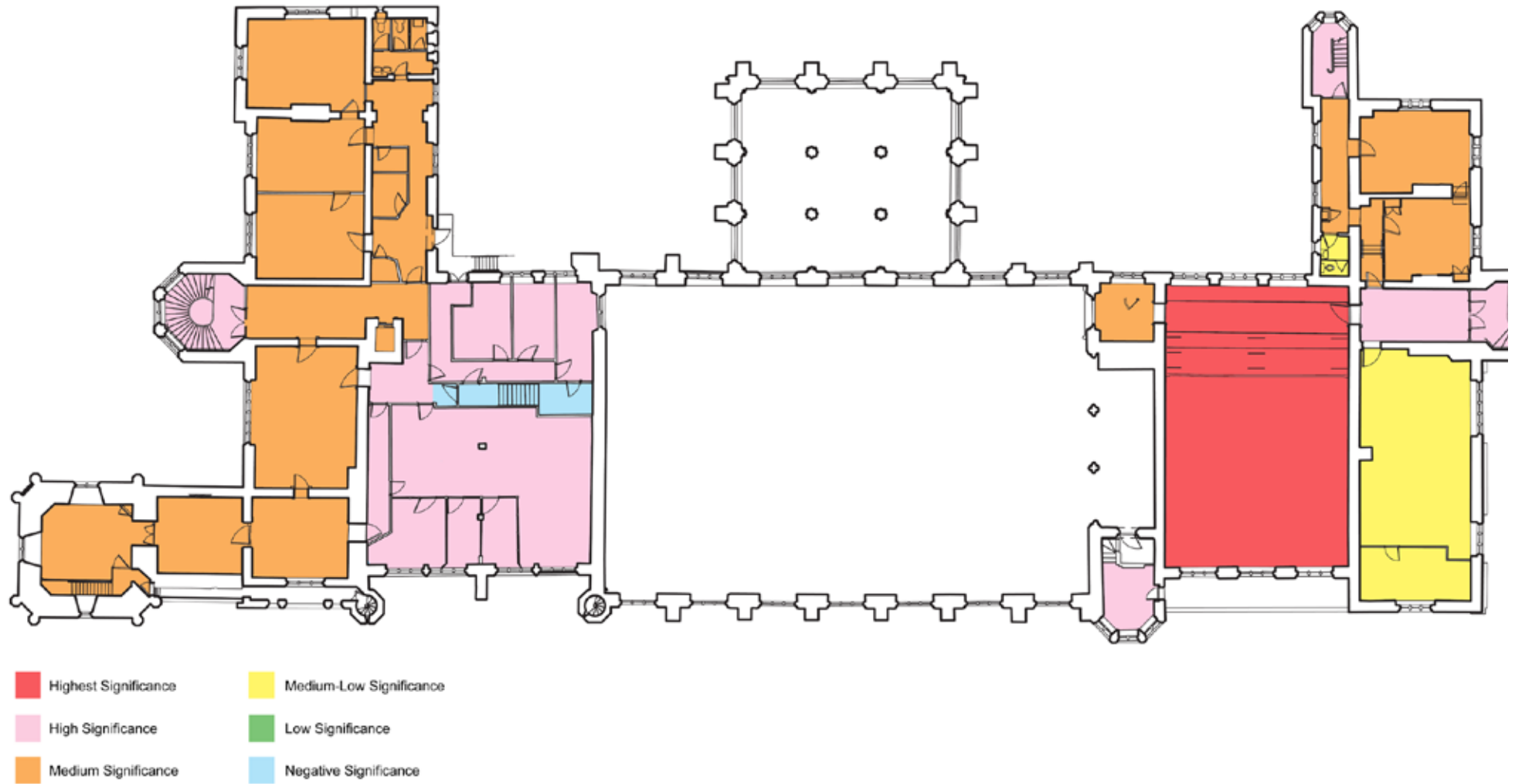
Mezzanine Floor Significance



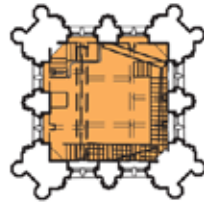
First Floor Significance



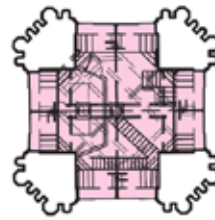
Second Floor Significance



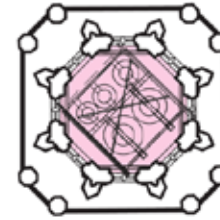
Third Floor Significance



Fourth Floor Plan

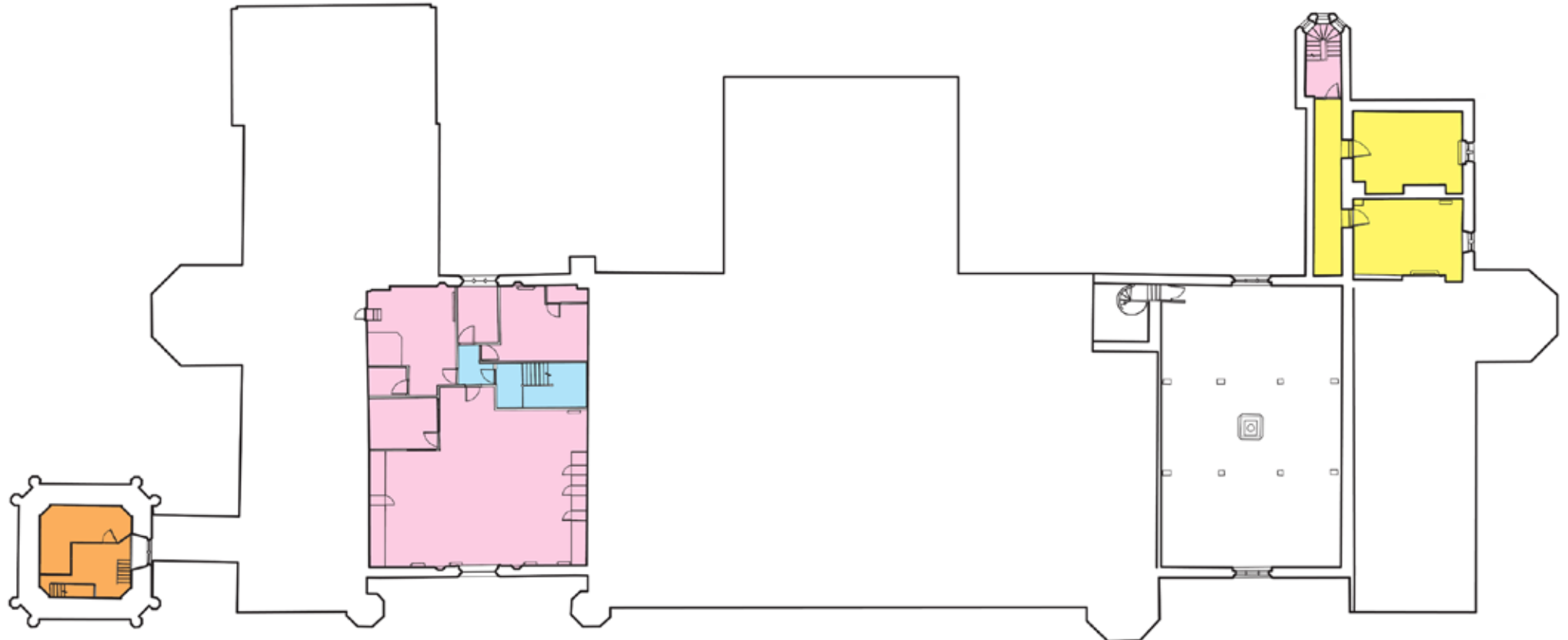


Clock Chamber



Bell Chamber

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Highest Significance | ■ Medium-Low Significance |
| ■ High Significance | ■ Low Significance |
| ■ Medium Significance | ■ Negative Significance |



3.2 Conservation Management Plan

3.2.1 Its Contents and Purpose

The development of proposals for Rochdale Town Hall, the people responsible for its creation 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 creation of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) - which has underpinned the development of the brief and the scheme. The purpose of the CMP is to provide a framework to manage the heritage of the place, both for regular maintenance and repair and for when decisions about change have to be made.

The CMP has recently been updated into a c.250-page document which comprises a comprehensive Appraisal, Management Plan and Gazetteer, all combined in an easily-searchable interactive format, to enable all users to easily find relevant topic areas. The document acts as a tool, providing an understanding of the significance of the building and its setting, upon which informed decisions about making changes to the building and its setting can be made, in a manner consistent with their conservation. It includes comprehensive phasing and significance analysis, as well as a series of policies to guide change to the building, which are being used by the design team in the development of proposals and detailed design.

The CMP is considered as a 'living document', and as such it will be updated on a quinquennial basis. But firstly, the document will be updated following the completion of works, in order to capture the latest



changes to the building comprehensively and to provide policies for the management and maintenance of the building going forward to ensure the on-going success of the project following completion in securing the long-term conservation of the building.

ROCHDALE TOWN HALL

Conservation Management Plan



Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

3.3 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:

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.

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.

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'.

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 Project Brief

4.1 Overall Aims

Rochdale Town Hall is owned and managed by Rochdale Borough Council. Many of the administrative functions have relocated to the new offices at Number One Riverside, and therefore the Town Hall's function as council offices has almost ceased. Some areas are now underused and have reverted to storage, whilst others are crowded with surplus office furniture and equipment. There are numerous instances where the current use or management of rooms affects the significance of the building, or where aspects of the building are not well-suited to 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. The principal aims of this project follow those within the Conservation Philosophy, and are as follows:

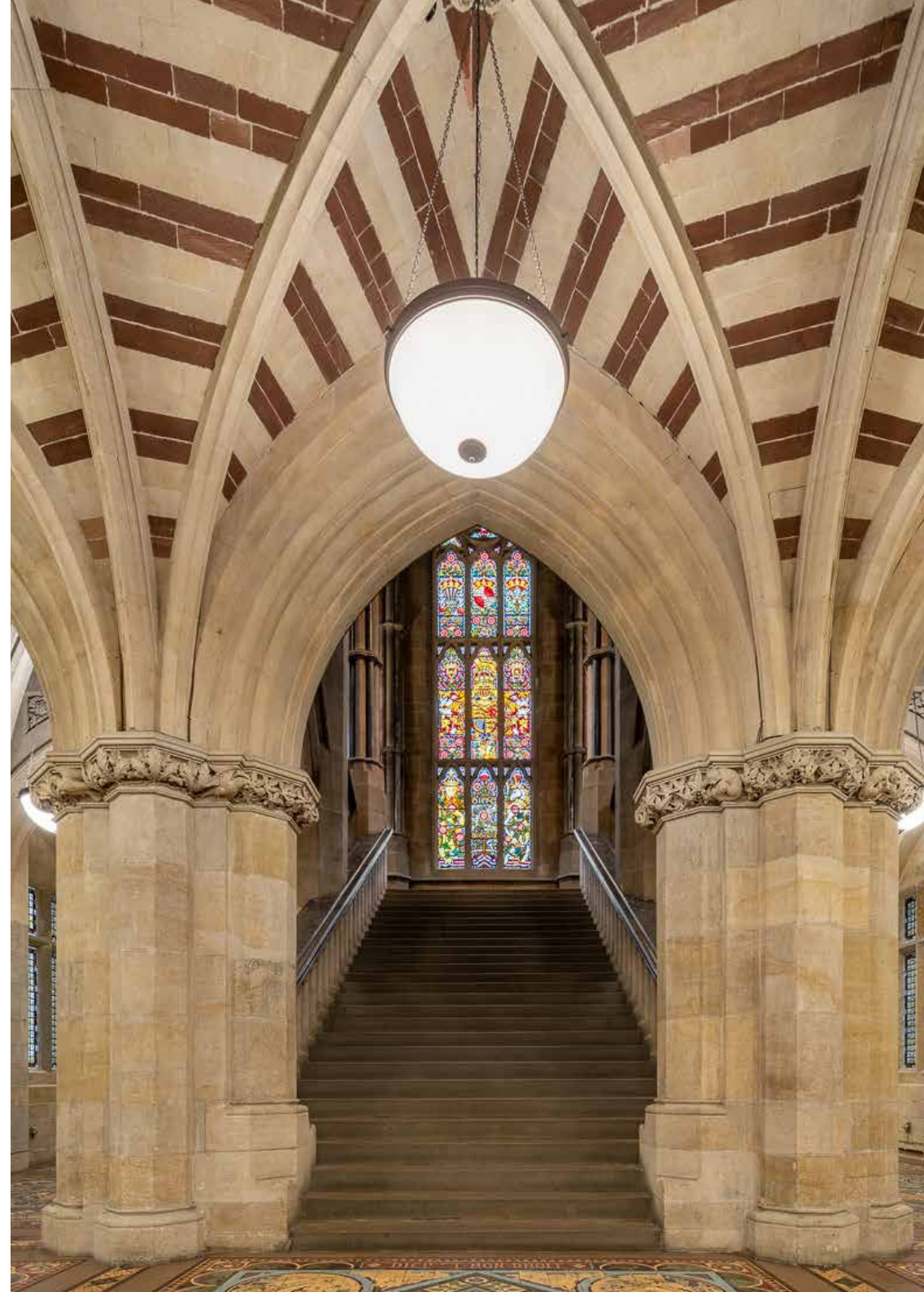
Continued use of the building in a manner sympathetic to its original use and function whilst allowing sensitive adaption to accommodate modern requirements.

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

The Town Hall project sits within wider scheme of town centre regeneration, which involves improvement works to the public realm, which do not form part of this application.



4.2 National Lottery Heritage Funding

The NLHF invest in the restoration of historic buildings only when the proposals can clearly demonstrate significantly improved long-term physical and intellectual access for the public. Whilst the capital costs of restoration can make up the majority of the grant, it is typically awarded based on what that restoration generates in terms of outputs for public engagement. The areas that will be key for the NLHF in our project are the more welcoming entrances, level and equitable access in as many elevations as possible, vastly increased physical access to a greater percentage of the building, intellectual access to the main historic rooms, increased volunteer involvement with the building and increased learning and training. The proposed Heritage Conservation Skills Studio is exactly the type of work the NLHF would like to see generated from the project and involving and engaging the wider community in this project is regarded as a huge benefit.

4.3 Opportunities and Challenges

Significance

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.

Accessibility and Interpretation

Rochdale Town Hall is one of the very finest examples of civic architecture in the country and is a communal asset to the people of Rochdale of the highest significance. However, the very nature of its imposing Victorian Gothic design renders it inaccessible both physically and – in some cases – culturally to people within the local community.

Currently the Town Hall lacks adequate interpretation for a wide range of audiences. There is the opportunity here to reengage the community initially through the building's restoration.

At present there is no disabled access to upper floors in the west side of the building, apart from the first floor via the Great Hall.

Funding and Income

- Rochdale Borough Council has committed significant investment towards the restoration of the Town Hall despite huge budget cuts.
- The Council and its partner, Rochdale Development Agency, continues to support a full time conservation officer post and an experienced heritage projects team.
- The team have secured the North West's 2nd Heritage Action Zone in collaboration with Historic England; reopened the River Roch revealing the historic bridges (RTPI award-winning project) and undertaken extensive public realm improvements within the conservation area.
- The team are also engaged in the restoration of the 1930s Fire Station with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- A Heritage Conservation Skills Studio will be initiated by RDA.
- Our strategy to overcome cost pressures is to thoroughly understand the existing building through early commissioning of surveys, soft market testing, opening up works and trials - all during the development phase.
- Working closely with the cost manager, we have come up with intelligent solutions to phasing and sequence of works, ensuring an efficient use of the funds available.
- Phase 1 is designed to reduce risks and unknowns during the Phase 2 NLHF funded works.



Condition

External and internal condition surveys, opening up works and specialist surveys undertaken throughout RIBA Stage 2 and 3 have highlighted a number of issues that put the building at risk, both internally and externally. The building envelope is not watertight; the roof is leaking badly in areas and many of the windows let water in. The masonry is failing in areas and the Bright Hall gable is leaning precariously outwards. The later introduction of cementitious mortar is exacerbating the failure of the masonry and open and vulnerable mortar joints are present across the building. Continued water penetration will undoubtedly encourage both dry and wet rot within the timber throughout the building - putting the structure and the highly significant historic painted interiors at further risk. A lack of building maintenance in the past combined with the inclusion of inappropriate repairs means that many features of the interior decoration are now in need of conservation. Similarly, unsympathetic building alterations require a programme of works to unveil hidden historic interiors and reverse damage caused by these modern interventions. There is imminent risk of building failure through fire, with numerous dangerous

electrical faults identified and only the original wet risers still installed within the building, meaning that there is currently no way of fighting a fire within the building. The wet risers are also still live and therefore there is a risk of the building flooding should a failure of the pipework occur. The current proposals address these weaknesses and upgrade the building fabric to improve its performance and sustainability. It is crucial that the fabric of the building is left in good repair to reduce risk to the fabric.

Sustainability and Services

- The thermal and energy efficiency of Rochdale Town Hall has in recent years been poor, rated as one of the lowest possible energy efficiency categories (F) in 2015
- An EPC rating of D can be achieved following completion of the NLHF funded, Phase 2 works, reducing the energy bill by approximately 50%.
- The existing mechanical and electrical services were investigated and a significant proportion have been found to be beyond economic repair and requiring full replacement before serious damage is caused to the fabric of the building.

4.4 Proposed Use

The use of the Town Hall will remain the same – Class D1 - with ancillary uses including civic, café, bar, events, exhibition space and offices.

4.5 Amount of Development

The proposals do not involve increasing or decreasing the overall floor area of the property and are instead concerned with strip out, and structural enabling works to de-risk and facilitate the implementation of a larger phase of NLHF funded restoration works.

5.0 Design Statement

5.1 Methodology

The retention of original fabric and stripping out of later inserted fabric in order to gain a fuller understanding of the building prior to implementation of Phase 2 works is a critical objective of the proposed scheme. The methodology for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 works is set out in the diagram on the following page.

Phase 1 works are to facilitate the Phase 2 works and therefore refer to the separate Phase 2 application for further explanation of why particular areas of strip out are required. Phase 1 is designed to reduce risks and unknowns during the Phase 2 NLHF funded works. Removal of later additions will allow for further surveying / assessment of works required at Phase 2 - this was not possible with the previous opening up works, as the works are costly, intrusive and the building is still occupied.

5.2 Surveying the Existing Building

5.2.1 Historic Development

The historic development of the property is described in detail within the CMP – which is provided with this application as an accompanying Specialist Heritage Report. This understanding informed the layout of the proposals, which seek to retain original room sizes where possible.

5.2.2 Metric Survey

A full laser scan of the building has been conducted as part of the development works to accurately record the existing building and 2D drawings produced from this have provided the basis for developing the proposals.



5.2.3 Opening up Works

A series of opening up works were undertaken as part of RIBA Stages 2 and 3, which assisted the design team to gain a fuller knowledge of the Town Hall's makeup, structure and detailing. From these works RIBA Stage 3 designs could be drawn up with the confidence that the proposals are able to be practically implemented within the confines of the existing building fabric. The findings of these opening up works can be found in the supporting documentation.



A number of floors were opened up to understand the primary and secondary structures, which assisted to understand loadings, existing fire and acoustic insulation methods and potential new routes for services. Existing service routes were also sought out and studied to see if there was potential to reuse these as part of the new design proposals. Toilet and riser locations were finalised upon completion of these investigations and both acoustic and fire strategies were further refined. A number of roofs were also opened up to enable an understanding of the existing

roof construction. These investigations also assisted to inform how much insulation it would be possible to add to each roof area.

Tower scaffolds were erected within the Great Hall to enable a closer inspection of the ventilation 'fleche', the ceiling panels and the angels which sit at the base of each roof truss. From these investigations the design team gained a greater understanding of the condition of the ceiling panels and the construction of the 'fleche' and its associated damper mechanism. It was also established that it should be structurally viable to suspend new light fittings from the 'hands' of the angels, as depicted within the 1873 watercolour perspective by Edward Walker.

A further set of opening up works were commissioned at RIBA stage 3, when the design team had a more thorough understanding of the building, to inform any outstanding queries. These included opening up works to the mezzanine, further trial holes to inform structural proposals, inspection of ceiling voids and assessment of lath and plaster ceilings.

Sample cleaning trials were undertaken as part of the opening up works programme by a specialist paint conservator. These focused on rooms with highly decorated walls and ceiling panels, the angels and roof timbers to the Great Hall and the Magna Carta mural. These trials have informed the specification of cleaning methods, along with outline indications of programme and costs for specialist cleaning works. Mortar and brick samples were also taken for strength and petrographic testing, used to inform mortar specifications and structural proposals. Finally, underground drainage surveys were also commissioned and the remedial results incorporated with structural proposals.



Opening up works

5.3 Overarching Proposals

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 outlined in Section 4.3 above. The majority of change and a reduced scope of repairs focusses on areas of lower significance, 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.

5.4 Description of the Proposals

Phase 1 has been developed to include a series of works, which would prepare the building for the main NLHF funded project (Phase 2). These enabling works

include internal strip-out, asbestos removal, structural works, installation of dry risers and a trial replacement window. Exposing original fabric and volumes would enhance the understanding of the building to inform the Phase 2 technical design work, reducing the risk of unknowns to the NLHF funded works. This would also maximise the opportunity to integrate and conceal services without impact on the significance of the building. The scope of works is focused largely internally; predominantly in the centre and east of the building.

The Phase 1 works are centred on achieving the following objectives:

Protecting the significant interiors of national importance

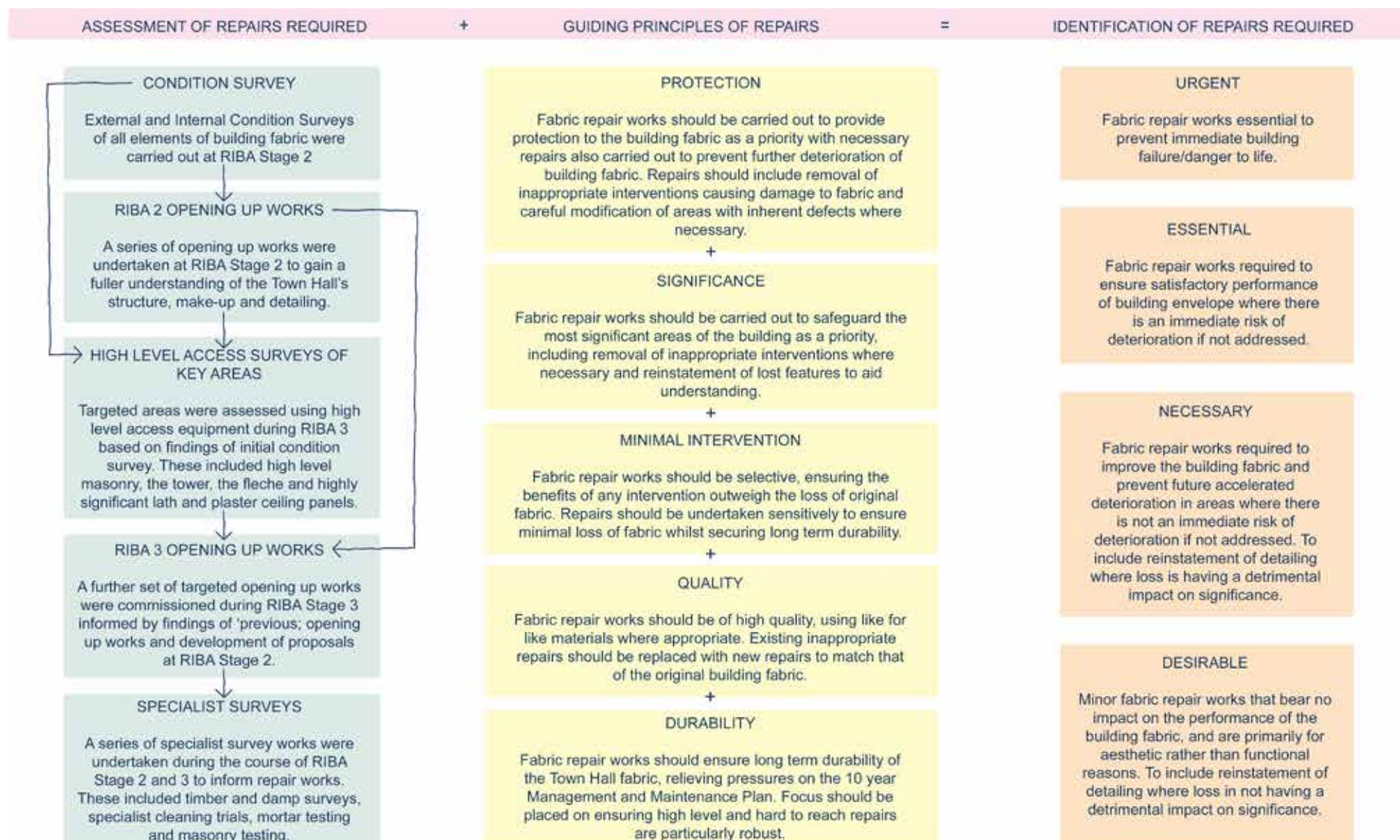
Drainage repair works would halt any further decay of fabric during the closure of the building and duration of the NLHF funded works delivery programme. Special protections would also be installed during Phase 1 to safeguard significant building fabric of national importance from any potential damage.

Reducing the risk of unknowns

Undertaking careful strip out works in advance of the main programme of works would reveal the original building fabric and proportions and enable the design team to prepare informed detailed proposals and measurement of costs for repair.

Removal of modern fabric

The removal of modern linings, partitions, structures and mezzanines would reveal original fabric, volumes and spaces to inform the development of the detailed design proposals.



Above: *Repair Works' Strategy*

Improving the safety of the building

Asbestos removal and MEP strip out works - including the termination of live services, where redundant, and old pipework and wiring – would reduce the risk of fire and water damage and would improve the safety of the building in advance of the main works.

Increasing the capacity for protection of the building

Removal of the existing wet risers and provision of new dry risers to modern standards, would improve the safety of the building in the event of a fire in advance of the main works.

Reducing design risks and time delays

The formation of lift pits, service trenching and other structural openings would allow more 'risky' structural works to be undertaken at an earlier stage, preventing potential delays to the Phase 2 programme. Installation of a new three phase electrical supply at an early stage would also help to mitigate potential delays to the main works programme. Phase 1 preliminaries will include a requirement for the Phase 1 contractor to handover accurate as-built drawings so that any risk of the Phase 2 contractor not accepting works as built is mitigated and the lines of responsibility clear at the outset.

The scheme principally comprises strip-out works, the exposure of structure that was not possible in previous opening up works, asbestos removal and further works, as listed below:

- Lifting and careful storage of stone flags in the Porte Cochère and installation of a new structural floor slab.

- Formation of structural openings and strip-out works within the tower to enable Phase 2 circulation core.
- Removal of existing lift and installation of two new lift pits.
- Installation of a trial window to inform design decisions and allow consultation prior to wider Phase 2 replacement works.
- Substantial strip out of the modern areas of mezzanine between ground and first floor.
- Substantial strip out in the Bright Hall, to remove modern partitions and the modern mezzanine floor.
- Structural works, strip out, excavation and installation of new slabs and M&E trench at basement level.
- Removal of wet risers and insertion of dry risers.
- Storage of removed elements of interest, including timber partitions, stone flooring and joinery.
- Removal of later external interventions, including fire escape stairs and access ramps.
- Structural and strip-out works to the café and committee rooms flanking the Exchange.
- Structural alterations to enable the implementation of Phase 2 works.
- Installation of a new three phase power supply



Basement to undergo stripping out and structural works



Modern partitions and mezzanine removed to reveal Bright Hall

5.5 Sustainable Approach

The needs of the building fabric, the significance of the building, its long-term sustainability and budget restrictions, have together informed the phasing of the main works. The works described above are being implemented as an initial phase of the project to enable and de-risk the larger Phase 2 project. The Phase 3 areas of works has been allocated to the west wing of the building, hopefully to be completed as part of a later capital works reuse project funded by RBC. The split between Phase 2 and Phase 3 was carefully selected to ensure Phase 2 areas of the building could operate to be independently and commercially viable to generate enough income to fund the long-term management and maintenance of the building as a whole. Phase 3 will be developed at a later date to augment the commercial spaces within the building. It should be noted that in Phase 2, the full envelope of the building will be repaired and basic heating and emergency systems will be provided for Phase 3 areas to ensure they remain protected until the implementation of Phase 3 takes place.

Most works to upgrade the thermal efficiency of the building will take place as part of Phase 2 of the project; however some of the infrastructure to facilitate these adaptations will take place as enabling works as part of Phase 1. For instance – a new three phase electrical supply will be installed as part of phase 1 works, due to the long-time scales that these works generally have, in order to de-risk the Phase 2 works programme. A new service trench will be installed to the basement as part of Phase 1 works to facilitate implementation of a more rationalised and energy efficient services system as part of the phase 2 works. The existing clear glass windows,

which are not fit for purpose and leak continuously, are to be replaced with 'Slimline' double glazed units as part of the Phase 2 works in order to improve their thermal efficiency. A trial window, the location of which has been carefully agreed with the conservation officer, will be installed as part of the Phase 1 works to inform and allow consultation on the intervention prior to more wholesale replacement within Phase 2. See accompanying drawings and MEP report for further details.

5.6 Ecology

Ecology has been a key consideration throughout the development proposals, with Rochdale Town Hall being famous amongst the local community for its resident Peregrine Falcons, which nest upon the tower each year. A preliminary ecological assessment was carried out as part of RIBA 2, which identified a single common pipistrelle bat entering the building behind the guttering of the south west elevation and a single peregrine falcon perched on the tower nesting tray, as well as the presence of feral pigeons roosting in other areas of the building. Design proposals have been developed with respect to both the bats and peregrine falcons.. Phase 1 works will be programme accordingly to avoid disturbance of the peregrine falcons, ensuring that structural works to the tower are implemented outside of nesting season. Bat emergence surveys were undertaken in May 2020 identifying a day roost, and a further emergence survey is planned for June 2020 to establish whether or not this is a maternity roost. Phase 1 works are mostly low level and internal, therefore should not impact bat habitats, however appropriate licenses will be applied for as necessary and designs will be developed as part of

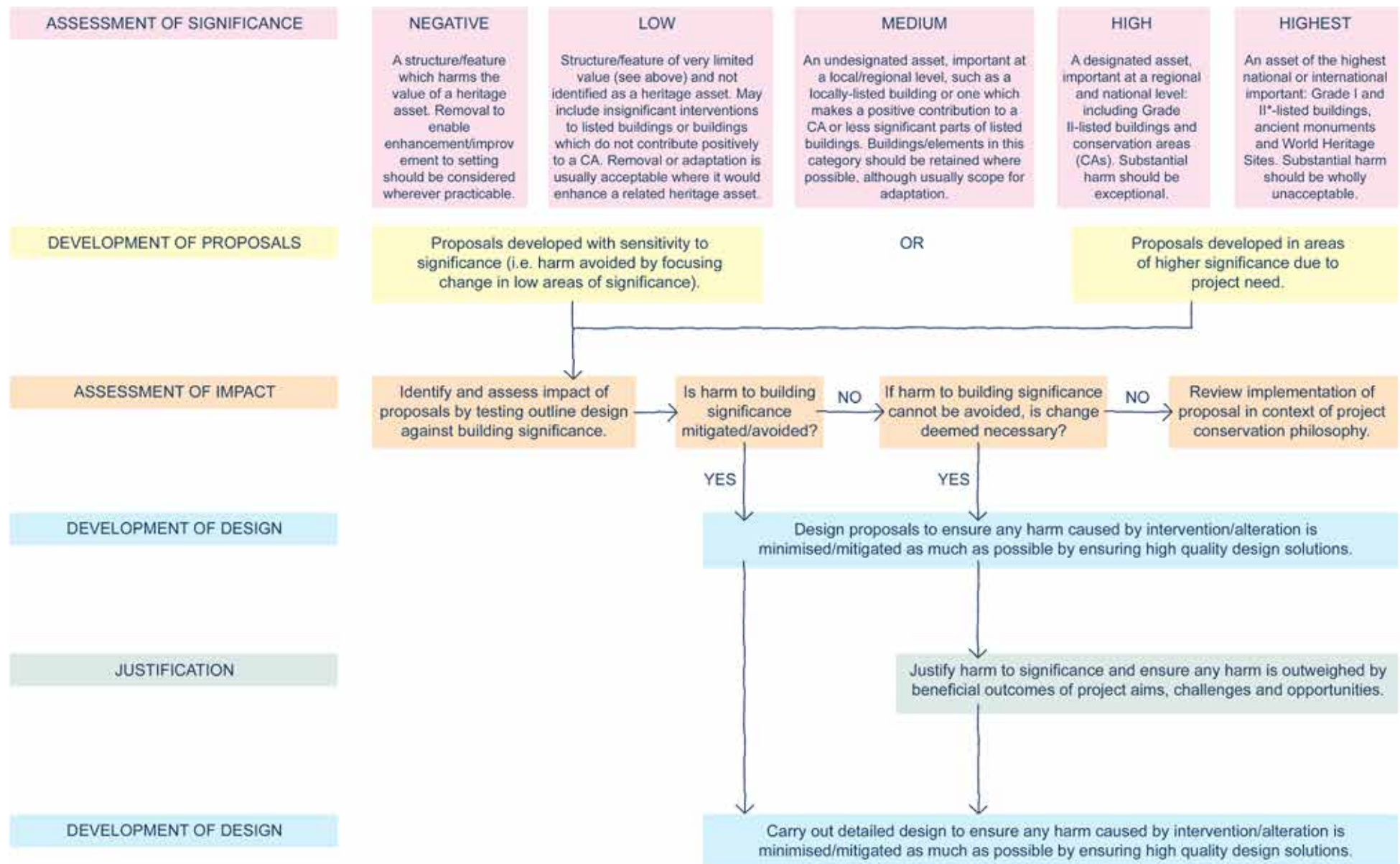


Overall it is clear that the glazing in general is the big area of heat loss.



The above image shows the heat loss from the Great Hall roof

RIBA stage 4 to take into consideration findings and recommendations of these surveys. An ecologist will also be present when works start on site to provide guidance as appropriate. Refer to accompanying Ecological Reports for further details.



Above: Alteration Improvement Works Strategy

6.0 Access Statement

6.1 Introduction

The vision for Rochdale Town Hall will include improved access for all visitors, particularly those with disabilities, that will be delivered by the interpretation, activity plan and building design. This delivery has included significant collaboration with an accessibility consultant throughout RIBA 2 and RIBA 3, who the design team have worked with to ensure Rochdale Town Hall becomes truly accessible and an exemplar in the region.

As part of the Phase 1 works, Rochdale Town Hall will temporarily be closed to the public, with the exception of organised visits as part of public engagement. The building will not reopen until the end of Phase 2 works, with some areas to remain closed to the public until the future Phase 3 works are progressed. Phase 2 addresses a number of aspects to greatly improve the accessibility of the building, which are outlined below:

- A new lift and staircase within the clock tower to enable access for all to the reinstated Bright Hall;
- External terracing managing changes in levels around the perimeter of the building and achieving level access for all in a single and clear architectural device;
- New accessible facilities to make the building easier and more comfortable to use for all;
- Revised circulation and the provision of new lifts.

Please refer to the Phase 2 application for a full description of the accessibility improvements.

6.2 Parking

During and following Phase 1 works the parking area to the South of the building will be closed as part of the site area and this will remain until the building re-opens following Phase 2. A new landscaping scheme (including revision of existing parking configuration) is to be implemented alongside Phase 2 works (not part of Phase 2 application).

6.3 Opening Hours

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

6.4 Refuse, Recycling and Emergency Access

The existing refuse and recycling method will remain largely as existing, but with some key improvements implemented as part of Phase 2 works to improve the way that refuse is stored and taken up through the building for collection. Please see Phase 2 application for further details. The Town Hall will be closed from the start of Phase 1 to the end of Phase 2, and no refuse collection is envisaged during this time.

Access for emergency vehicles will remain and be unchanged by the new proposals. Dry risers are proposed to each end of the building to replace the existing wet risers in the east and west stair cores as identified in the M&E reports. During Phase 1 the risers will have temporary inlet valves for connection, which will be incorporated within the proposed terracing designs during Phase 2 of the works. It was considered exceptionally important for the existing wet risers to be removed and new dry risers to be installed as part of the Phase 1 works in order to remove the risk of flooding and allow the fire brigade to be able to fight a fire on the upper levels of the building, which is currently not possible.

6.5 Flood Risk

The application site is in Flood Zone 2; in accordance with National and Council policies, a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out and accompanies this application.

7.0 Planning Statement

7.1 Project Objectives

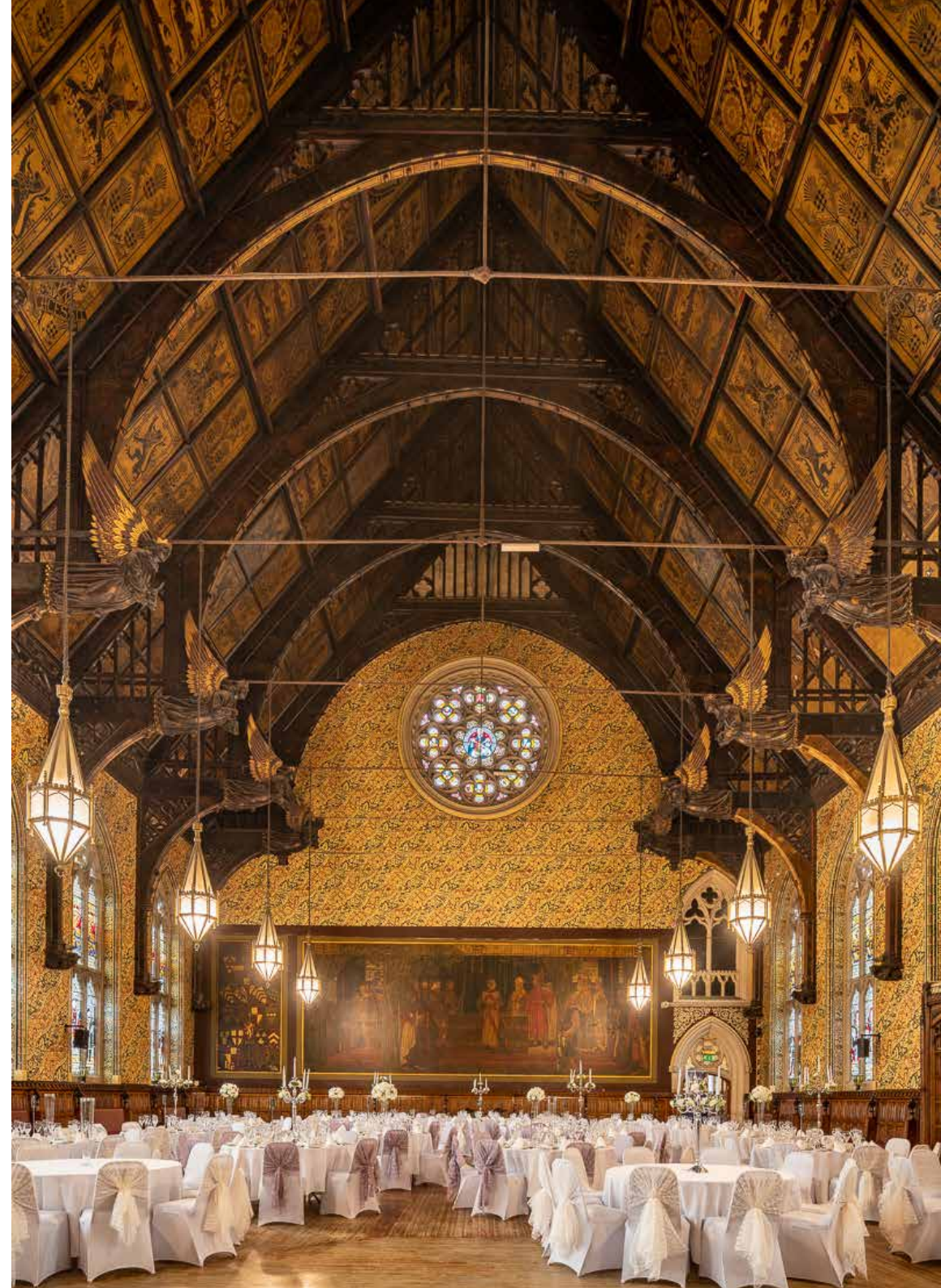
As summarised at the overall introduction to this statement, the principal aims of the Town Hall project are as follows:

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





7.2 Summary of Relevant Planning Policy Context

This section provides a summary of the relevant adopted planning policy that has been considered as part of the preparation of these applications. The review covers national, regional and local planning policies as well as other relevant guidance, where appropriate and how the scheme complies.

7.2.1 The Site and its Legal Status

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. Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent; development in conservation areas or within the setting of a listed building or conservation area requires local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage. The present planning use class is D1, with ancillary uses and these proposals do not require a change of use.

7.2.2 National Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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 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.

As set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment, which accompanies this application, the proposals would preserve, and indeed enhance, the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation areas and therefore the presumption against the grant of planning permission within the Act is not engaged.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised February 2019), articulates the priorities of the *Plan for Growth* within planning policy.



At the heart of the NPPF lies the ‘presumption’ in favour of sustainable development, which supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up to date Development Plan. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF states that:

the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. (Paragraph 7)

It summarises the objective of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that to achieve sustainable development, there are three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued mutually.

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.

This report demonstrates the clear and convincing justification for these proposals – which, viewed in isolation, would bring forward clear benefits including the removal of a significant amount of modern and detracting fabric including modern suspending ceilings and partition walls, mezzanines, 1930s screens and joinery and the external rear fire escape, halting further deterioration of historic fabric and ensuring the safety and security of the building. However, the wider scheme of works which they would enable must also be noted; founded in securing the viable use of the building in a manner which would ensure its relevance and accessibility to the community it serves, in a manner not previously achieved in the lifetime of the building. Considering the scale and sensitivities of building this achievement should not be underplayed and the requirement to undertaken enabling works in advance of the main project prudent.

A more detailed assessment can be found in the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.



Section 8 focusses on the promotion of healthy and safe communities, through planning policies and decisions, which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and which enable and support healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities including cultural buildings and other local services, to enhance the sustainability of communities. They should also take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

As outlined in full in the Heritage Impact Assessment and in the Statement of Public Benefit, the proposed works would enable a scheme which 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; whilst the proposed community uses and Heritage Conservation Skills and Training Studio would engage the local community with the key heritage asset of exceptional interest in a constructive way.

Section 14 of the NPPF sets out the need to meet the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Sites should be assessed appropriately for the risk of flooding and take advice from the Environment Agency and other risk management authorities.

When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

The application site is in Flood Zone 2; in accordance with National and Council policies, a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out and accompanies this application.

Paragraph 124 notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to creating better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 127 outlines that decisions should ensure good design by ensuring developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*



e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The proposals accord with all of these requirements, in particular items a), b), c), d) and f).

Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment, particularly in the context of sustainable development.

The NPPF 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 NPPF 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 189, 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 the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment contains the assessment of significance; which meets this requirement and is based on the research and site surveys undertaken as part of the Conservation Management Plan (2019), which are of a sufficient level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

The Framework also, in Paragraph 193, 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 194 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 4 of the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment contains provides 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 195, that:

... local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or 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 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.*

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 within the Heritage Impact Assessment. As such it can only be concluded that the proposals, at worst, would cause 'less than substantial' harm.

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in Paragraph 196, that:

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

Whilst this report concludes that these Phase 1 proposals would cause no harm to significance, it is helpful to consider the impact of the wider scheme to provide context for these enabling works. 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 and are set out in full in the Statement of Public Benefit and Heritage Impact Assessment.

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 200 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.

Perhaps most significant in terms of what the project that the Phase 1 works would enable to achieve more widely is the re-engagement 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 interpretation, activity planning and training proposed - better revealing the significance of the building itself as well as its contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

Concerning conservation areas it states, in Paragraph 201, 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 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), updated October 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in March 2014 as a live web-based resource to support the NPPF. It brings together planning practice guidance for England in an accessible and usable way and is a material consideration in assessing this application. This resource was updated in October 2019. This guidance has been taken into account in the development of these proposals.

Paragraph 001 sets out how well-designed places can be achieved through the planning system; by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. Guidance should follow both the NPPG and the National Design Guide – which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what ‘good design’ means in practice, using the following 10 characteristics:

- *context*
- *identity*
- *built form*
- *movement*
- *nature*
- *public spaces*
- *uses*
- *homes and buildings*
- *resources*
- *lifespan*

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design, that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality and conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

The NPPG advises how local planning authorities can support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings through ensuring any advice to developers is co-ordinated to guarantee consistency between energy, design and heritage matters (Paragraph 008).

It also includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The NPPG recognises that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets. It states that:

- *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.*

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.

In Paragraph 006, the NPPG refers to the Glossary of the NPPF to describe 'significance' as follows: in terms of heritage-related planning policy, significance is defined 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.

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 007).

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The NPPG sets out that developments which impact upon heritage assets should deliver public benefits (Paragraph 020). These benefits should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, NPPG notes that benefits do not always have to be visible

or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. 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; and*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.*

7.2.3 Regional Policy

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (Draft, January 2019)

The Revised Draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), 'Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment', was published for formal consultation in January 2019, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which closed on 18th March 2019.

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stages of preparation; the extent of unresolved objections; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework. Whilst the GMSF is still in draft and at the early stages of consultation, it is considered to carry some weight in the determination of planning applications.

Policy GM-S 1 (Sustainable Development) seeks to encourage developments to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits and highlights that previously-developed (brownfield) land will be prioritised to meet development needs.



Policy GM-P 1 (Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth) recognises the importance of supporting a thriving economy in Greater Manchester, placing an emphasis on the following: maintaining economic diversity; facilitating high value clusters in prime sectors (Advanced manufacturing; Business, financial and professional services; Digital; Health innovation; and Logistics); making the most of major assets including existing and proposed transport infrastructure; and providing the high-quality, sustainable living environments.

7.2.4 Local Policy

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council Policies

Rochdale Core Strategy

The Core Strategy for the Rochdale Borough Local Plan was adopted on 19th October 2016 and sets out the strategies for the Borough through to 2028.

Policy SP2 sets out the Spatial Strategy for the borough, which aims to meet the development needs of the borough.

Rochdale will have a transformed and attractive town centre which is highly accessible to its residents and visitors due to Metrolink, and a new transport interchange. The development of Kingsway will be a huge success providing quality new jobs and new employment opportunities in the Town Centre, Castleton, Stakehill Business Park and South Rochdale will be available. The most deprived areas of the town will be regenerated with better housing, jobs, facilities and environment. New homes will be attracting new residents to the borough as well as matching the needs and

aspirations of existing residents. Rochdale station and the adjoining area will be regenerated as a new transport / mixed use hub providing an exciting gateway into the borough.

Policy SP3/R is the Strategy for Rochdale, the priorities for Rochdale are to transform Rochdale town centre (Policies SO1,SO2,SO3,SO4,SO5) by:

- *Focusing growth and major retail, leisure and office developments which will maintain and reinforce the centre as the main town centre (Policies E1,P1);*
- *Delivering major new retail led development in the Rochdale town centre east area that is well integrated with the existing centre and surrounding area (Policy E1);*
- *Supporting major transport works and improvements to deliver a high quality public transport interchange (Policy T1);*
- *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 E1 Establishing thriving town centres, with a good range and choice of shops, activities and facilities, will help make the borough an attractive place to live, work and do business. Policy E1/R specifically seeks to establish Rochdale as a thriving town centre – as the main location for major



developments attracting a large number of people. In particular, planning permission will be granted for development that supports the vitality and viability, such as major retail, leisure, cultural and office development. Below is a selection Council objectives:

- *Open up part of the river Roch through the town centre along with associated public realm improvements;*
- *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;*
- *Support and develop the proposals set out in the adopted Rochdale Town Centre Masterplan or Rochdale Town Centre SPD for the redevelopment, refurbishment and improvement of the centre and its public realm;*
- *Support a greater mix of uses and improve the public realm around the Butts and Smith Street to help create a focal point for activities, events and visitor attractions;*
- *Improve links to, and the use of, Memorial Gardens, the Town Hall, Touchstones, The Butts and promote its potential as a visitor attraction.*

This scheme is the focus of one of the key elements within this policy and it is considered that it would accord with this policy.

Policy E5 relates to encouraging the visitor economy through enhanced visitor attractions, which will benefit the local economy by broadening its economic base,

providing additional employment and improving the image of the borough. To do this, the Council will focus on promoting the following tourism opportunities:

1. Rochdale town centre, where we will:

- a. Promote the heritage attractions of the Town Hall, Broadfield Park and the Municipal Gardens, and the Toad Lane Pioneers Trail linked through to the river and the retail centre (Policy E1/R); and up to the Parish Church; and*
- b. Ensure that new development complements and relates well to, and enhances, the above assets.*

3. River Roch Valley corridor, where we will:

- a. Promote and enhance a Roch Valley recreational trail and linkages to key visitor destinations; and*
- b. Improve and enhance perception and image of, and access to, the river with a focus on delivering this in Rochdale town centre.*

As set out in the Statement of Public Benefit and supporting documentation, the Phase 1 works form part of a project which will significantly improve the Town Hall as a commercial venue for hire but also through the new visitor and community offer, increased accessibility and new spaces will enable complementary uses to take place simultaneously. This will significantly enhance sustainability of the Town Hall and enable continued investment in the offer thus ensuring the Town Hall continues to be an asset to the Borough and beyond.

Policy P2 relates to the protection and enhancement of 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:

a. Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;

b. Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;

c. Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;

d. Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and

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 non-statutory, 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;

iii. The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;

iv. The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;

v. The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and

vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

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.

The Heritage Impact Assessment outlines the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets in detail, and concludes that the proposals would meet the requirement set out within this policy, particularly according with 1c) and e) and 2a), c) and d).

Core Strategy Policy C8 sets out how improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities will help improve resident's health and quality of life and make

the borough a more desirable place to live, work and visit. The policy states the vital role of arts, cultural facilities and entertainment facilities, in attracting residents and visitors and in supporting local culture and improving the borough's image. Section 8 also highlights accessibility as a critical issue for community facilities - to ensure they are usable by all groups, including those without access to a car and with restricted mobility.

Section 9 (SO3) Improving design, image and quality of place Improving the 'quality of place' of the borough is a priority if it is to be a place where people choose to live. It will help to:

- Create livelier, more interesting and distinctive town centres, housing areas and public spaces;
- Attract investment and improve prosperity;
- Make people feel good about the place and improve their health and well being; and
- Make it a destination of choice.

To improve design, image and quality of place, Rochdale's policies seek to:

- Protect and enhance the best aspects of the borough's character and heritage;
- Make development more attractive and sustainable, with a cleaner, greener and safer environment;
- Improve the image of the borough including the most visible, highest profile places such as town centres and gateways; and
- Take a positive role in the promotion of better design.



Policy P1 seeks to improve the image of Rochdale, through requiring high quality design and by 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. Rochdale Town Hall, is identified as one of the borough's major assets and this section goes on to set out how public art and heritage assets can play a major part in re-enforcing the borough's character and distinctiveness and can be incorporated in many ways in developments and regeneration schemes.

The overall scheme, which places 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.

Policy G1 - tackling and adapting to climate change – new development within the borough should minimise its contribution to climate change, and adapts to its impacts. The Council will ensure the borough plays its part in delivering national targets in respect of climate change by the following measures:

- *Expecting all development and regeneration schemes to be well connected to surrounding areas and facilities by sustainable means of transport (Policy T2);*
- *Promoting the efficient re-use of buildings, especially those of heritage value, and the recycling of construction waste;*
- *Making the best use of open space to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

The scheme is fundamentally 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.

Policy DM1 sets out the general development requirements, which all development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations; they will be expected to demonstrate that they are:

- a. Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;*
- b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses;*
- c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users;*
- d. Mitigate (as necessary) against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access;*
- e. Provide satisfactory vehicular access;*
- f. Do not have an adverse impact on health;*
- g. Provide, or demonstrate the availability of, the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs;*
- h. Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property;*
- i. Take account of ground conditions;*
- j. Incorporate, where appropriate, high quality landscape schemes;*
- k. Have assessed whether the development may be affected by ground instability;*

l. Have considered the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure; and

m. Do not lead to impacts detrimental to the conservation interests of European Protected Sites.

The proposals have been developed to accord with all of the elements within this policy, specifically a), b), c), d), f), g), h), k) and m).

Rochdale Renaissance Masterplan (2010)

This was developed as a vision document, as part of the Council's LDF, to guide the implementation of development. The Masterplan focussed on delivering 7 key themes:

1. Creating sustainable neighbourhoods
2. Developing 21st century employment sites
3. Establishing thriving town centres
4. Capitalising on our environmental assets
5. Focusing on strategic gateways and corridors
6. Accessible and integrated transport
7. Design and image

As part of **Section 3**, the Masterplan identified the Esplanade and the area around the Town Hall as having the 'potential to become a first class public space and a quality Cultural Quarter'. In Section 7, the Masterplan discusses conservation and heritage, recognising that: 'there is a growing recognition that conserving and enhancing the Borough's built and natural heritage brings economic and environmental benefits'. The Masterplan also states that the Borough has one of the best architectural and historic heritage bases of any

authority in the North West, which helps to define a sense of place and character. Rochdale town centre – particularly the Town Hall - was identified as one of the four key assets in the Masterplan.

7.3 Rochdale Town Hall Planning History

Installation Of Air Conditioning Unit

Rochdale Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale

Ref. No: 08/D50353 | Received: Fri 18 Jan 2008 | Validated: Fri 18 Jan 2008 | Status: Unknown

Installation Of Air Conditioning Unit To Grade 1 Listed Building

Rochdale Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale

Ref. No: 08/D50354 | Received: Fri 18 Jan 2008 | Validated: Fri 18 Jan 2008 | Status: Unknown

Construction Of Bin Storage Area And Formation Of 7 Additional Car Parking Spaces Within Town Hall Car Park

Site Of Former Mortuary Building, Rear Of Rochdale Town Hall, Rochdale, Lancashire

Ref. No: 05/D45046 | Received: Tue 08 Mar 2005 | Validated: Tue 08 Mar 2005 | Status: Decided

Refurbishment Of Committee Rooms 1 And 2 Of Listed Building

Rochdale Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale

Ref. No: 00/D37681 | Received: Wed 24 May 2000 | Validated: Tue 23 May 2000 | Status: Decided

Refurbishment Of East End Toilets (First Floor)

Rochdale Town Hall The Esplanade Rochdale

Ref. No: 94/D31296 | Received: Mon 03 Oct 1994 | Validated: Thu 13 Oct 1994 | Status: Decided

Two Non-Illuminated Panel Signs

Rochdale Town Hall The Esplanade Rochdale

Ref. No: 90/D25492 | Received: Thu 21 Jun 1990 | Validated: Fri 06 Jul 1990 | Status: Unknown

7.4 Statement of Community Involvement and Summary of Consultation

7.4.1 Pre-application Consultation with Statutory Consultees

Rochdale Borough Council

During the course of the development of Stage 2 and 3 proposals, there have been a series of informal pre-application meetings and a continuing constructive ongoing dialogue with Rochdale Borough Council. Key individuals include Jessica Scott (Conservation Officer) and Samia Syeda (Planning Officer). A Stage 3 pre-application meeting was held on 30th April, along with Historic England (HE). The following document was presented: Stage 3 Statutory Consultation Document, DIA. A further pre-application meeting was held with RBC on 14th May 2020.

Historic England

Historic England (HE) were consulted in November 2019, at which point the case officer was Ross Brazier. This consultation included a presentation and walking tour, led by Architect Becky Mills. The following

material was presented and shared: Stage 2 Mid-Point Review Report, DIA and the Updated Conservation Management Plan, DIA. Feedback was received by letter on 15th February 2020.

A *Stage 3 Statutory Consultation Document*, DIA was prepared and presented to Richard Broadhead (HE) and Jessica Scott (RBC) on 30th April 2020. Feedback was received by letter on 21st May 2020. This letter concluded that Historic England are supportive of the principles of the scheme. The full letter can be found in the Appendix.

7.4.2 Non-statutory Stakeholder Consultees

The Victorian Society

The Victorian Society were consulted in November 2019. This included a brief presentation and a walking tour, led by Architect Becky Mills. The following material was shared: *Stage 2 Mid-Point Review Reports*, DIA. A formal response via letter was received on 20th December 2020.

A follow up meeting to discuss the scheme in more detail has been delayed due to COVID-19 and instead a presentation document has been prepared and sent for the Society's review. It is anticipated that following this review, the team will carry out further consultation with the Society, following the submission of the listed building consent and planning applications.

7.4.3 Stakeholder Consultation

The development of the proposals have been submitted regularly during RIBA Stage 2 and 3 to the client project team and as necessary, Board. The proposals were signed-off by Board at the completion of RIBA Stage 2 and 3. Between February 2019 and May 2020, throughout RIBA 2 and 3 design stages, the Town Hall Project Team have consulted on the development of options, with feedback incorporated where appropriate.

In addition to the client team and statutory consultees outlined above, the following stakeholders have been engaged as part of the pre-application consultation process:

Rochdale Borough Council

- Executive Members and Councillors
- Building Control
- Highways
- Facilities Management
- Events Management
- Estates Management

Heritage

- FORTH
- Touchstones
- Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS)

Access

- Building Control

Fire

- Rochdale and services

Security

- Counter Terrorism Policing North West

Utilities

- Please refer to Max Fordham's Report.

7.4.4 Further Consultation and Events

The project aims to restore people's pride in their town as a place of trade and industry, community support and tolerance. In the birthplace of co-operation, we will encourage people to learn about and value their civic heritage, ensuring that its continuity is cherished and relevant for future generations. The little known social heritage of our culturally rich Borough will be captured, shared and celebrated.

The **activity programme** has been created following extensive consultation with our communities, key audience groups, and stakeholders, and developed with the support of our project partners and stakeholders. The programme contains a total of 19 projects, which are split into the following themes: Arts and Crafts Heritage, Placemaking; Storytelling; Conservation in Action and Civic Voices. More information on the activity programme and a full record on consultation events carried out over the period of April – August 2019 can be found in the Appendix.

7.5 Statement of Public Benefit

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:

- **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**

This resultant scheme offers 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 a series of major public benefits. Furthermore, 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.

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) and clarified under paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Guidance. The guidance states that 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.

Public benefits can be categorised under the following three main headings:

***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.*

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 the Grade I listed building's 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 and are summarised below under the three principal categories:

a) an economic objective

Since the hugely successful river Roch re-opening scheme, the value of using heritage as a driver for the economic and social wellbeing of the town has been seen by all. The Town Hall restoration and forthcoming Town Hall Square public realm projects are key elements of an ambitious overarching heritage-led town centre regeneration strategy led by Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Development Agency. Over the next five years, the Council intend to bring forward 2,000 high quality new homes in and around Rochdale town centre, redevelop its unique heritage assets to create a stunning public realm, and further improve the day and evening visitor offer and its transport infrastructure. More information on how

the Town Hall project sits within the wider context of Rochdale's regeneration can be found on RDA's website here: www.investinrochdale.co.uk; with summaries on investment opportunities as part of the £400m regeneration of Rochdale town centre here: [Rochdale Town Centre delivery plan](#) and a document setting out the regeneration of key sites around the Borough's stations, including Rochdale Station and the Heritage Action Zone here: [Rochdale rail corridor strategy](#).

The restoration of Rochdale Town Hall will include conservation and interpretation works throughout the building and will significantly increase and improve public access. The highly significant spaces within the Grade I listed Town Hall will be freely accessible to visitors and will be a 'safe' space where cross-cultural activities are supported and encouraged.

The Town Hall will be open for commercial and community bookings seven days a week, with the café accessible internally and from its own dedicated external entrance, drawing visitors to the building to the benefit of the town centre economy more widely. 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 and therefore the conservation of the building in the long-term.

Overall, the project will significantly improve the Town Hall as a commercial venue for hire but also through the new visitor and community

offer, increased accessibility and new spaces will enable complementary uses to take place simultaneously. This will significantly enhance sustainability of the Town Hall and enable continued investment in the offer thus ensuring the Town Hall continues to be an asset to the Borough and beyond.

In summary, this project would bring about the following economic benefits:

- 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 commercial areas;
- 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;
- Creation of 9.5 FTE permanent jobs and up to 50 positions including casual events staff and Town Hall ambassador volunteers;
- Giving the Town Hall a sustainable future.

b) a social objective

Perhaps most significant in terms of what the project would achieve more widely is the re-engagement 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 interpretation, activity planning and training proposed - better revealing the significance of the building itself as well as its contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

Interpretation proposals and activity planning have been developed in tandem with the proposed physical interventions to greatly increase public access to and understanding of the Town Hall to restore people's pride in their town as a place of trade and industry, community support and tolerance. The ambition and vision seeks to 'gift Rochdale Town Hall back to the people of the Borough, actively involving people in telling their stories as testimony to Rochdale's manufacturing, entrepreneurial and trading past and present, the continuity of its civic purpose and philanthropy, and its celebratory communal heritage, creating a shared sense of Rochdalian identity, pride and ownership'.

The principal ceremonial rooms of the Town Hall will be made accessible and freely available for the first time in its 150-year history. Visitor facilities will be upgraded and a new family friendly programme will improve the financial and environmental sustainability of the building, doubling visitor numbers.

The project aims to restore people's pride in their town as a place of trade and industry, community support and tolerance. In the birthplace of co-operation, the project will encourage people to learn about and value their civic heritage, ensuring that its continuity is cherished and relevant for future generations. The little

known social heritage of this culturally rich Borough will be captured, shared and celebrated. Full details of how this will be realised can be found in the Appendix.

Social Value was embedded in the project from its inception and forms part of the framework for its delivery, and beyond. To date, RDA and the consultancy team have worked with local schools to deliver the Design Engineer Construct!® (DEC!) learning programme; through providing short online tutorials and feedback on final projects. In addition, Insalls and Price & Myers have both appointed apprentices who are solely working on the Town Hall project.

Social Value will be continued throughout the delivery of the project, and will include a series of projects and workshops with Falinge Park High School – whereby each of the consultants and main contractor will input with tutorials, presentations and feedback sessions to help guide the students through the process supported by a series of site visits, workshops and school visits. The Contractor will deliver Construction Apprenticeships, providing the traditional apprenticeship skills in areas including scaffolding, roofing, joinery and stone masonry; seeking to recruit from the local Hopwood Hall College. In addition, during the course of construction, the contractor will facilitate monthly Construction Tours.

The Heritage Conservation Skills and Training Studio proposals offer opportunities for specialist training in a unique heritage setting whilst also addressing the need to conserve such an important Grade I-listed building. The training on offer will help to raise aspirations of the community and young people by introducing them to career opportunities they may

not have considered or are not available elsewhere in the borough. The work placements directly respond to the requirement of the new T Levels being offered at the local college from September 2020 meaning our proposals offer a broad range of opportunities aimed at upskilling the local community and improving their life chances. The Appendix contains more detailed information on the aims and implementation of the Heritage Conservation Skills and Training Studio.

In conclusion, this project would bring about the following substantial social benefits:

- 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;
- Creation of Heritage Conservation Skills and Training Studio – as an investment in the wider community;
- Appointment of three apprentices to the project and commitment to appointment of four construction apprentices;
- Provision of monthly construction tours;

- Assistance in the delivery of DEC course at local high school.

c) an environmental objective

Underpinning the ambition to reinforce the building as a cultural landmark for the local community is an extensive scheme of repair and restoration of the original fabric, to halt further decay and prevent the need for more extensive repair and replacement. These are outlined in detail in the accompanying Planning, Design and Access Statement, proposed drawings and input from specialist consultants.

While Rochdale Town Hall has remained in constant use, the nature of breathing new life into existing buildings is rarely limited to sensitive repair alone. As outlined in detail in the accompanying Planning, Design and Access Statement, drawings and supporting consultant reports, a 'passive-first' approach has been taken alongside solutions designed in response to the significance of the building. The upgrading of the Town Hall to be inherently more 'green' will see the repair works and upgrades to thermal and energy efficiencies which would conserve the fabric of the building in the long term, alongside the specification of appropriately long-lasting materials from sustainable sources, and avoiding high carbon footprints where possible.

In summary, the project would bring about the following considerable environmental benefits:

- 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;
- The delivery of exemplary levels of sustainable design in respect of the new build elements of the scheme;
- Facilitating improvements to the sustainability performance of the building (including target 40% gas and 60% electricity reduction);
- Improvements to the internal environment control to better conserve the important wall paintings and stained glass;
- Creation of Heritage Conservation Skills and Training Studio – ensuring the ongoing skilled maintenance and management of the building;
- 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.

