

Officer Report

Case Reference: 25/00840/LBC
Location: Rochdale Town Hall The Esplanade Rochdale OL16 1AZ
Proposal: Installation of a bronze metal commemorative plaque 460 X 350 mm for the late former Rochdale MP Sir Tony Lloyd
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Sam Yuen

SITE DESCRIPTION

Rochdale Town Hall is listed at Grade I on the National Heritage List for England, placing it amongst the most significant historic buildings in the country. Designed by William Crossland, it is a fine example of a Victorian town hall as well as being an outstanding example of the Gothic Revival. Its original form is little altered except for the later tower, added after the original burned down. Internally original decorative schemes remain including in the Great Hall and the Exchange. The Town Hall has recently reopened to the public after undergoing a major restoration.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

Listed Building Consent is sought for the installation of a installation of a bronze metal commemorative plaque measuring 460 X 350 mm for the late former Rochdale MP Sir Tony Lloyd. The design would include raised lettering and be attached to the wall with stainless dowels and resin. A small specific light source may also be provided.

Originally the plaque was requested to be installed in The Exchange, but as this space is one of the most significant in Rochdale Town Hall, a revised plan has been submitted which would see the plaque installed in The Welcome Gallery on the rear wall.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended)

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone joint development plan (PFE)

Places for People

JP-P1: Sustainable Places

JP-P2: Heritage

JP-P3: Cultural Facilities

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

24/01130/FUL Alterations to Rochdale Town Hall during the Phase 1 & 2 works, (consented schemes approved ref; 20/00576/FUL, 20/00577/LBC, 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC) works included; installation of concrete slabs, stone cills. Removal of brick structure, service trench, bar benching, engineering works in basement, terrace grilles change in material.

Granted STC.

25/00846/LBC Listed Building Consent for installation of modern artwork hanging track system onto walls. Granted STC

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Historic England - Recommend seeking the views of the Council's specialist adviser.

Conservation Officer - No objection to revised proposals.

Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies - No comments received to date

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding neighbours, a site notice displayed in the vicinity site and an advertisement placed in the local press. No public representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority [...] shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”

NPPF paragraph 213 states 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.”

Paragraph 215 states that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.”

The above means that the local planning authority is required to place considerable weight (great weight in the terms of the NPPF) on the need for conservation. This means that changes to listed buildings which may result in some harm should be avoided or, if that is not possible, the impact minimised. The LPA may grant LBC for the works if the public benefit outweighs that harm.

Concerns were raised by the Conservation regarding the proposed original siting of the plaque on the basis that the Exchange with its intact and original decorative scheme is one of the most significant rooms within the Town Hall and contributes greatly to its special architectural and historic interest. The concerns are that the installation of a plaque into the wall would undo the work previously undertaken to remove wall fixtures and better reveal the original decorative scheme. It is considered that while a relatively small addition, it would've detracted somewhat from the simple stonework of the original decorative scheme.

On this basis, an amendment has been secured which would see the plaque installed on the rear (southern) wall of The Welcome Gallery. This area is a much less significant space than the Exchange and the plaque would be attached to a rendered wall, this eliminating any notable harm to the original stonework.

Given the placement of the plaque in a less sensitive part of the Town Hall, it is considered that any impact on significance would be at the lower end than less than substantial harm. However, given the public benefit of commemorating a notable and well-respected local political figure in the Town Hall, this harm would be overcome to result in a neutral impact overall.

On this basis, it is therefore considered that the proposed development would comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, adopted Places for Everyone joint development plan policy JP-P2, adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies DM1, P2 & P3 and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (3)

- 1 The works must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:

- Location Plan – drawing no. A1/2005406/01 received 14/08/2025

- Proposed Floor Plan and Plaque Location – drawing no. A1/20025 received 13/11/2025

- Proposed Floor Plan and Elevation – drawing no. A1/20025 received 27/11/2025

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The plaque hereby approved shall not be removed until such time as a scheme for the making good and repairing of any building fabric has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

