

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/01071/LBC	Christiana Shovlin	29 November 2023

Address: Rochdale Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale, OL16 1AZ

Proposal: Interior design scheme to aid the creation of a café within the West Wing at the Ground floor

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	n/a
	Neighbour comments received?	n/a

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	n/a
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	n
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	n/a

RECOMMENDATION	Grant subject to conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RG

DATE: 01 December 2023

SITE

The application relates to the Rochdale Town Hall, a Grade I Listed Building, widely regarded as one of the finest Victorian town halls in Britain. The building was completed in 1871 at a cost of £155,000. The frontage and principal entrance of the Town Hall faces The Esplanade and the River Roch, and features a three-arched Porte Cochere intersected by buttresses. The building has a roughly symmetrical 'E-shaped' plan, and is broken down into three self-contained segments: a central Great Hall and transverse wings at each end. The present stone spire and clock tower was built to replace the original tower destroyed in a fire in 1883; it rises from a plinth with four stages including a gable-headed clock stage, and is topped with a small stone spire. The Town Hall is presently closed to the public to allow for Phase II of the restoration works.

The building was first listed at Grade I on 25th October 1951; the listing text reads as follows:

Town hall. 1866 - 71, 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 14 bays is asymmetrical but balanced with linking bay and tower added to left. Outer bays have triangular gables and are of 3 storeys, although they differ in treatment. The next 2 on left and 3 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 2- light pointed windows and a steep pyramidal slate roof with cresting. The central 3 bays have a heavily buttressed porte-cochere supporting heraldic beasts and acting as a balcony to the Hall which is lit by tall 3-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 3 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 3 bays with weathered buttresses and very tall 3-light windows, roofed separately. The entrance hall is 5 x 3 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 3 pierced diaphragm arches, 2 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.

The site also lies within close proximity of a number of other Designated Heritage Assets, including:

- Market Cross – Grade II
- St. Chad's Church – Grade II*
- Wall by St. Chad's Church – Grade II
- Former Rochdale Museum – Grade II
- County Court – Grade II
- Rochdale Cenotaph – Grade I
- War memorial lamp-posts – Grade II
- Rochdale Post Office – Grade II
- Broadfield Park (Registered Park & Garden)

A number of non-designated heritage assets are also in close proximity and are locally listed buildings, including:

- Empire Hall
- Flying Horse
- Church Steps
- Natwest Bank
- Former Town Hall Chambers

The Town Hall is situated in the heart of the Town Centre Conservation Area and forms an integral part of the Esplanade and square. Situated to the south of the river, the square was an artistic creation with set-piece buildings in an expansive layout planned according to romantic and picturesque principles. The scheme is completed by romantic gardens created on the valley slopes (registered park grade II) of Broadfield Park.

The west wing

The location of the proposed ground floor café sits within the West Wing. This location has been assessed within the submitted heritage statement as being of “medium” historical significance within the context of the wider site.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks Listed Building consent for the creation of a restaurant and servery to the ground floor of Rochdale Town Hall's west wing. This follows on from the recently consented refurbishment of the hall's west wing (Ref. 23/00591/LBC).

The proposal broadly seeks to instate new lighting fixtures, restaurant furniture and a servery. The general scheme includes instating timber panelling and painting as part of the general decoration scheme.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

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

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – February 2019
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1	Delivering a more prosperous economy
E1	Establishing thriving town, district and local centres
E2	Increasing jobs and prosperity
E5	Encouraging the visitor economy
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P1	Improving image
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a green environment
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
G8	Managing water resources and flood risk
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility
SD1	Delivering sustainable development
DM1	General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

20/00615/FUL - Restoration and refurbishment of Rochdale Town Hall incorporating civic spaces together with ancillary functions, including events, exhibition and interpretation spaces, upgraded bar and cafe. Works to include; glazing of Porte Cochere and tower link, new terraced access to building perimeter, external repair works, specialist repair of decorative interiors, restoration of key internal spaces and selective window replacement; new services including lifts, plant and equipment; new facilities including exhibition, toilets and storage; and associated works (Phase 2 of restoration and refurbishment works to facilitate the building's continued use).

20/00616/LBC - Restoration and refurbishment of Rochdale Town Hall incorporating civic spaces together with ancillary functions, including events, exhibition and interpretation spaces, upgraded bar and café. Works to include; glazing of Porte Cochere and tower link, new terraced access to building perimeter, external repair works, specialist repair of decorative interiors, restoration of key internal spaces and selective window replacement; new services including lifts, plant and equipment; new facilities including exhibition, toilets and storage; and associated works (Phase 2 of restoration and refurbishment works to facilitate the building's continued use).

23/00590/FUL - Phase III restoration and refurbishment works to Rochdale Town Hall, continuation of Phase II works (approved 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC); to include roof repairs and improvements, modification of below ground drainage,

installation of an air source heat pump at the rear carpark, internal alterations, replacement of MEP services throughout the building, accessibility improvements throughout the building, addition of a lift to all floors, and conservation works to heritage rooms

23/00591/LBC - Phase III restoration and refurbishment works to Rochdale Town Hall, continuation of Phase II works (approved 20/00615/FUL & 20/00616/LBC); to include roof repairs and improvements, modification of below ground drainage, installation of an air source heat pump at the rear carpark, internal alterations, replacement of MEP services throughout the building, accessibility improvements throughout the building, addition of a lift to all floors, and conservation works to heritage rooms

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies

No comments received to date

Historic England

“Thank you for uploading the completed application form and for your consultation regarding the above application. On the basis of the information available to date, in our view you do not need to notify or consult us on this application under the relevant statutory provisions.

If you consider that this application does fall within one of the relevant categories, or you have other reasons for seeking our advice, please contact us to discuss your request.”

REPRESENTATIONS

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

ANALYSIS

The concerned rooms within the West Wing of the Town Hall were assessed along with the rest of the building ahead of the first application to restore it. This description reads: “The space now occupied by the restaurant is of medium significance. Designed as the Treasurer’s Department, the space has some historic value, but its aesthetic value has been eroded by removing internal walls and features.” After having visited the site and surveying extant building fabric, this assessment is agreed.

Most elements of the proposed will have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building; this is mainly concerning the wall and furniture scheme. The proposed panelling is designed to be fully reversible, and as such, will not permanently affect any historic fabric. The painting scheme is primarily for surfaces which have been painted/refinished within the past 30-40 years, therefore an application of a new paint finish would be an update and would constitute an improvement. Any potential negative impact one could interpret by the aesthetics of the redecoration scheme would be outweighed by the public benefits of instating a new café to the recently refurbished Town Hall. Along with this, the redecoration scheme has employed local decorators and designers to design and carry out the works.

There is some less than substantial harm incurred by the creation of 2 no. new lighting locations. The proposed location of the new lights would not cause harm to any of the historical fabric of the space, as these ceilings were of plasterboard instated, again, sometime in the past 30-40 years. No new wiring runs will be required as part of these installations as these works have already been consented for.

There is some potential impact which could be considered in fixing the restaurant furniture / servery to the floor. However, this floor is assessed as being a “modern timber floor;” this analysis is agreed after having visited site. Again, this is what was initially described as fabric which has served to “obscure” in the original features present in Crossland’s design. A refurbishment of these features can enhance the significance of the listed building. In order to ensure the scheme’s adherence with standards of best practice for heritage redecoration schemes, final details will be required by condition prior to instatement. In ensuring standards of best practice are followed throughout the design process, the heritage significance of this section of the listed building will be enhanced by the proposed. The appended “Concept Design” document for the scheme is agreeable; more specific details will be required prior to implementation.

Principle of Development and Heritage Impacts

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, 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. Similarly, Section 72 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the Applicant has submitted detailed evidence which is proportionate to the Grade I listing of the Town Hall, and clearly demonstrates the extent of the works and their strong understanding of the archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic significance of the building. The Application contains a series of plans and documents, including a Heritage Statement (in line with the stipulations of NPPF paragraph 194) and is supported by a Conservation Management Plan, composed in 2019 by lead architect Donald Insall Associates, which is continuously developing and evolving as works progress.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF 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 Court of Appeal decision in the case of *Barnwell vs East Northamptonshire DC* 2014(2) clarified that decision makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out the balancing exercise’.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Detailed consultation has been carried out at the pre-application stage with the Council’s Conservation and Design Officer(s) who have assessed each element of the café design scheme in detail. Much of the work has been assessed as having a neutral/beneficial impact.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. This consent relates to the following plans and documents:-

- Location Plan Ref. RTH-DIA-D5-XX-DR-A-4070 Rev. P01
- Location of Works Ref. RTH-DIA-XX-10-DR-A-0100 Rev. P01
- Rochdale Town Hall –Ground Floor proposals Ref. ROC 0G 01 Rev. A
- Proposed ceiling layout Ref. ROC 0G 01 Rev. A
- Rafters, Lighting & Window Elevation Ref. ROC 0G EL1 Rev. A
- General Arrangement 2 Ref. ROC 0G 01 Rev. A
- Served Elevation Ref. ROC 0G EL1 Rev. A
- Served Details Ref. ROC 0G S1 Rev. A
- Wall finishes layout Ref. ROC 0G W1 Rev. A
- Wall finishes layout 2 Ref. ROC 0G W1 Rev. A
- Rochdale Town Hall Concept Design – Dragonfly
- Heritage, Design and access Statement – Restaurant fit-out, September 2023 – Donald Insall Associates

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the Core Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. No works to instate timber panelling shall commence until cross-sectional / elevation details, as well as timber specifications are submitted in writing to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Any cross-sectional details should indicate the overall depth of timber panelling and the means of securing to the wall; any elevations should indicate the design and scale of the panelling in relation to extant fabric. Timber specification must indicate species as well as origin. Timber panelling structures should be designed to be reversible, minimising any interaction with historic fabric.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate detailing and the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No works to instate new openings to accommodate lighting fixtures shall commence until a method statement for their creation is submitted in writing to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Any method statement must indicate the tools to be used in creating the holes, the method of installation for any new conduits, fixtures and/or associated equipment. This statement must include measures to ensure that no undue damage is incurred to historic fabric throughout the course of works.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate detailing and the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in

accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to their instatement, full product specifications of lighting fixtures and associated elements to be instated must be submitted in writing to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No works to instate server equipment or stationary restaurant furniture shall commence until full product specifications of all materials to comprise any semi-permanent elements, as well as a method statement for means of fixing are submitted in writing to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Any method statement must specify special measures to ensure that no undue harm is incurred to historical fabric throughout the course of these works.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate detailing and the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. No painting works shall commence until a finalised design, elevation details, and full product specifications of materials for feature wall art are submitted in writing to and agreed upon with the Local Planning Authority. Any elevation details should indicate the scale of the proposed design.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate detailing and the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No painting works shall commence until full product specifications of the finishes to be applied to doors and windows is submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Prior to their instatement, full product specifications and photographic samples of all soft furnishings (drapes, upholstery, hanging plants etc.), as well as specification of fixing materials/strategies must be submitted in writing to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Product specifications should include any relevant fixing materials, and a method statement should include measures which ensure that no undue harm is incurred to historical fabric throughout the course of these works.

Reason: In order to ensure the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the

interests of visual amenity and heritage and in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.