

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/00591/LBC	Christiana Shovlin	25 August 2023

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

Proposal: 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

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/a
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	n/a

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

DATE: 25 September 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.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks Listed Building consent for Phase III of a series of restoration and refurbishment works to the Town Hall which has been submitted together with an application for planning permission (23/00590/FUL). These works follow on from the planning application (20/00615/FUL) and Listed Building Consent (20/00616/LBC) for Phase II restoration and refurbishment works to the Rochdale Town Hall. Phase II works included the majority of the restoration works to the Town Hall and instated a terrace to the immediate surrounds of the hall; these works are presently nearing completion. The proposed Phase III works would centre on the west wing. These works would comprise the conservation and modernisation of the Council Chambers, instatement of balcony access to the roof of the Porte Cochere, shell and core repairs to the former fire station, specialist repair and restoration of decorative interiors, improvement of circulation and accessibility, instatement of new services to include a new lift, plant and equipment, installation of an air source heat pump to the rear car park, and roof repairs and refurbishments.

These works have been informed by the 2019 Conservation Management Plan by lead architect Donald Insall Associates. This report is in conjunction with a large series of supporting reports for the wider phased refurbishment of Rochdale Town

Hall, including a series of public realm works within the setting of the Town hall and within the wider Conservation Area.

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

20/00576/FUL - Enabling works to Rochdale Town Hall; including internal strip out, asbestos removal, structural works, installation of dry risers and a trial replacement window (Phase 1 of restoration and refurbishment works to facilitate the building's continued use).

20/00577/LBC - Enabling works to Rochdale Town Hall; including internal strip out, asbestos removal, structural works, installation of dry risers and a trial replacement window (Phase 1 of restoration and refurbishment works to facilitate the building's continued use).

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).

22/01503/LBC - Listed Building Consent for replacement of Westmorland slates to Vermont slates above the Bright Hall.

23/00084/LBC - Replacement and repositioning of 4no' 20th century lighting columns.

23/00288/LBC - Installation of protective netting underneath decorative plaster ceiling panels.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit

No comments received to date

GMP - Design For Security

No concerns

Historic England

Rochdale Town Hall is of outstanding national value. Designed by notable architects W. H. Crossland and (later) Alfred Waterhouse, combined with the high-quality craftsmanship and artistic talent of Heaton, Butler & Bayne, Henry Holiday and others culminates in one of the finest town halls in England. The building expresses the industrial wealth and politically radical context of Rochdale in the late 19th century, with its rich design and focus for civic activity ranging from the courts to the fire station and the principal public space of the Great Hall. The building is Grade I listed reflecting its exceptional interest.

The proposals form part of the ambitious masterplan for the town hall, which Historic England is supportive of. The application concerns Phase 3 of the redevelopment which focuses on the west wing, where the highly significant Council Chamber is located. The works have previously been agreed in principle in the conservation management plan and have been refined in accordance with the same philosophy as the scheme has progressed. The repairs and alterations detailed appear sensitive to significance and would ensure that harm is avoided and minimised where possible.

Recommendation

Historic England supports the applications on heritage grounds.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the applications. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decisions in due course.

GM Fire Service

No comments received to date

The Gardens Trust

No comments received to date

The Coal Authority

No comments received to date

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Env Health - Air Quality

No comments received to date

United Utilities

No comments received to date

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

No further archaeological works required.

Environment Agency

I recommend an updated bat and bird report prior to determination.

Conservation And Design

N/A

Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies – Victorian Society

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society about this application. We now write to offer our advice.

Removal of corridor walls and historic doors

We would like to echo Historic Buildings & Places comments concerning the lack of detail in the application concerning the removal of walls and historic doors surrounding the proposed lift:

“the documentation does not provide detail about the physical and visual impact as a result of the removal of the wall between the room and the two corridors. The proposed plans (there is no section plan covering this area) and the diagrams on page 34/35 or 56 of the Heritage, Design and Access Statement do not explain why such a large area of wall needs to be removed. The wheelchair turning circle on the proposed plan (Phase Three GA First Floor Plan as Proposed 2 of 3) suggests there would be adequate room to manoeuvre a wheelchair out of the lift if the wall remained between F14C and F11a. The question therefore arises regarding the need to remove that wall, or if a lesser alteration, such as just removing the wall between room F14C and corridor F14B, would be adequate to create the necessary circulation space and enable the main corridor to remain unchanged. In addition, there are no plans or details showing the impact on the form and character of the main corridor F1a/13a connecting the stair to the Council Chamber. It is

unclear what the proportions of the proposed opening would be or how a wide opening may affect the linear feel and appearance of the corridor. It is also unclear how the installation of cubicles will affect the room, such as how low the proposed dropped ceiling over the cubicles will be or if the cubicles are to be completely enclosed, detail about the finishes, etc, which is particularly important given they will be highly visible from the corridor... given the relatively high impact the associated alterations would have, your Authority must be absolutely assured the extent of removal proposed is necessary and that a lesser quantum of demolition would not be possible to achieve the aims of providing full access. ”

If all possibilities have been explored and it is deemed absolutely necessary to remove the above-stated walls, historic doors, and door frames, we recommend not only salvaging the historic doors but also the historic decorative door frames for future use within the building.

Addition of glazed balcony to the Porte Cochère

The addition of a glazed balcony to the roof of the Porte Cochere will result in a certain degree of harm to the façade, due to the disruption of the consistent spacing between the Porte Cochère buttresses. We recommend removing the glazing from the balcony and replacing it with black metal railings. The front section of the balcony, where the glazing would have the most significant visual impact, would benefit the most from this change. While glazing is transparent, it is not invisible. The reflections and the inevitable accumulation of fingerprints and dirt will enhance the balcony's visibility and impact. The replacement with railings would help reduce the surface area of the balcony's overall visual impact.

Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies – Historic Buildings and Places

Thank you for consulting HB&P on this application. For the most part, the repairs and works appear reasonable and well considered and address the future infrastructure and access needs of the Council and the Town Hall. However, based on the documentation provided, there are concerns about the treatment/ impact of the alterations proposed to room F14C and corridors F11a/13a/14b.

HB&P do not object to the introduction of the lift and note that room F14C is the most appropriate location, given the lower status of the room compared to the others on this floor, and the minimal impact it would have on the corresponding levels above and below. However, the documentation does not provide detail about the physical and visual impact as a result of the removal of the wall between the room and the two corridors. The proposed plans (there is no section plan covering this area) and the diagrams on page 34/35 or 56 of the Heritage, Design and Access Statement do not explain why such a large area of wall needs to be removed. The wheelchair turning circle on the proposed plan (Phase Three GA First Floor Plan as Proposed 2 of 3) suggests there would be adequate room to manoeuvre a wheelchair out of the lift if the wall remained between F14C and F11a. The question therefore arises regarding the need to remove that wall, or if a lesser alteration, such as just removing the wall between room F14C and corridor F14B, would be adequate to create the necessary circulation space and enable the main corridor to remain unchanged.

In addition, there are no plans or details showing the impact on the form and character of the main corridor F1a/13a connecting the stair to the Council Chamber. It is unclear what the proportions of the proposed opening would be or how a wide opening may affect the linear feel and appearance of the corridor. It is also unclear

how the installation of cubicles will affect the room, such as how low the proposed dropped ceiling over the cubicles will be or if the cubicles are to be completely enclosed, detail about the finishes, etc, which is particularly important given they will be highly visible from the corridor.

HB&P would also note for consideration a recent situation at the grade I Gladstone's Library in Hawarden, Flintshire (c.1902) in which the historic wooden cubical doors and dividers had to be replaced with modern materials to address sanitary concerns and impacts of discolouration from the cleaning process. Given the cubicles in the Town Hall will likely be highly visible from the main corridor to the Council Chamber, the materials will need to be carefully managed, or possibly consideration be given to a further wall/ door between the lift and cubicles to provide full separation.

HB&P has no objection to the installation of the lift but advise that given the relatively high impact the associated alterations would have, your Authority must be absolutely assured the extent of removal proposed is necessary and that a lesser quantum of demolition would not be possible to achieve the aims of providing full access.

Relevant NPPF (2021) policy considerations are:

- Paragraph 199: "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".
- Paragraph 200: "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."

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

For phase 3, I don't currently see a need for a Drainage Condition. My only comments are that we should be sent the locations of the Proposed Heat Pumps so we can check that they are located above flood level, and that electrical equipment that may have been in the cellars is relocated about flood levels.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

No comments received to date

The Gardens Trust

Thank you for consulting the Gardens Trust in its role as Statutory Consultee on the above application which affects Broadfield Park, an historic designed landscape of national importance which is included by Historic England on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II.

We have considered the information provided in support of the application and liaised with our colleagues in Lancashire Gardens Trust. On the basis of this we confirm we do not wish to comment on the proposals at this stage. We would however emphasise that this does not in any way signify either our approval or disapproval of the proposals.

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

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 2029 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 Phase III works in detail. Much of the work has been assessed as having a neutral/beneficial impact.

A summary of the works proposed and their impacts on the significance of the building is as follows:

Basement

Works proposed: Installation of services, plant equipment, storage spaces, instatement of the lift shaft pit

Impacts: The impact on the significance of the building are relatively low as this area of the building is of relatively low significance and will not be accessible to the public. On the balance of the optimum viable use of the building is seen as beneficial overall, under NPPF paragraph 197.

External entrances

Works proposed: The creation of accessible entrances by instating automatic glazed doors. The proposal is to retain the historical timber door in situ and hold it in the open position daily.

Impacts: These works would have some negative impact stemming from the instatement of a glazed door in these openings, however the retention and conservation of historic timber doors has mitigated these impacts whilst incurring a positive benefit overall related to improved accessibility. Therefore, these works would have an overall positive impact related to optimum viable use.

Changing Places

Works proposed: The creation of a changing places facility at ground floor level to be accessible 24 hours.

Impacts: There will be minimal disruption to historic fabric as a result of the proposed and the works will generally have a positive impact by serving a public benefit.

Fire Station

Works proposed: Restoration and repair works to improve the envelope of the building generally and to better reveal presently obscured original features. Installation of a man-safe system to the roof to allow for continue maintenance.

Impacts: All repairs are to use like materials to the original construction and will provide provisions for future maintenance. The heritage statement holds that these works will be wholly beneficial; this position is agreed.

New lift

Works proposed: The instatement of a new lift with access to each floor. To be located off of a major corridor/lobby adjacent to the principal spiral staircase. The location of the proposed lift has been discussed at length with the Conservation Officer at the pre-application stage. Have taken the preferred option and included this on the most recent plans.

Impacts/Consultee Comments: The instatement of the lift and accompanying amendments to building fabric will incur some less than substantial harm to the significance of the building. However, as previously mentioned, these changes have been discussed at length and are believed to be of lowest possible impact.

The comments from Historic Buildings and Places indicate concern regarding some alterations to built fabric relating to circulation space at the immediate exit of the lift at some levels. These questions have centred on why such a large proportion of the corridor at first floor level must be removed; they queried if an adjacent corridor could be used instead.

The lead architect, Donald Insall Associates, has responded that the suggested corridor would not be compliant in width for adequate circulation space and that the corridor chosen is the most viable option. This position is agreed, and whilst there is some less than substantial harm to the significance of the building, the degree of this harm has been mitigated as far as if possible and is outweighed by the public benefits of instating lift access at each level under NPPF paragraph 202.

Historic Buildings and Places has also expressed concerns regarding the appearance of the cubicles adjacent to the proposed lift at first floor level with regards to material and their potential effect on the linear feel of the corridor overall.

The lead architect, Donald Insall Associates, has provided elevation details and brief material specification for the proposed cubicles. Whilst there is some less than substantial harm to the significance of the building by instating cubicles at this

location, this has been carefully considered and mitigated as far as is possible. Furthermore, the public benefit of instating the necessary toilets in order to serve the Council Chambers outweighs the degree of this less than substantial harm.

Existing doors and new doors and screens

Proposed works: Reuse and conservation of existing doors of high significance. Upgrades to comply with fire separation regulations where necessary. Replacement of low significance doors with updated designs in hardwood in order to comply with fire separation regulations.

Impacts: There is some less than substantial harm incurred on doors of high/medium significance, as identified within the heritage statement, as a result of the upgrades for fire safety compliance. However, this harm has been mitigated by upgrading them only where necessary. The works will be offset with the aim of the doors' conservation under NPPF paragraph 199. The replacement of the front of house, low significance doors will have a beneficial impact in that these doors do not presently contribute to the significance of the building and their replacement for a compliant replacement would constitute a public benefit.

Porte cochere roof and balcony

Proposed works: This is in line with its original design and intended use. In order to facilitate this, it is proposed to instate a glazed, independent railing as well as an independent, aluminium decking system. This is designed to be fully reversible. This is with the purpose of complying with fall protection standards and allowing the balcony to be accessible in line with use of the Great Hall.

Impacts: The works are designed to be fully reversible and in line with the appearance of the glazed enclosure of the Porte Cochere at ground level (previously consented as part of the Phase II application).

The Victorian Society comments raised some concerns regarding the appearance of the glazed railing to balcony. Concerns were related to glare and the appearance from ground level. The comments show a preference for a cast iron railing; this is believed to be an aesthetic preference and whilst it would be in a historically sensitive material, it would not be reversible and also would not necessarily be in line with the glazed enclosure of the Porte Cochere below. Concerns related to the glare of the glazed railing and accumulation of dirt could be satisfied via glass specification and cleaning schedule (both of which to be satisfied by condition). Therefore, the preferable option would be for the glazed railing as it would be fully reversible and would not incur any harm to the stone detailing of the present railing. Whilst this could result in some less than substantial harm to the significance of the building, this harm would be outweighed by enhancing the significance of the balcony by restoring its intended use/design.

Council chamber

Proposed works: The stained glass window is proposed to be conserved and repaired by York Glazing Trust and proposed to instate minimal secondary glazing. Further conservation works are to various historical finishes. Additionally, modifications are proposed to improve accessibility. These include: replacement of the existing modern plywood floor, modifications to the 1980's seating. Additionally, the external roof vent is proposed to be modified to increase efficiency of the space.

Impacts: The conservation works would be wholly beneficial to the significance of the building. The modifications to the existing modern fabric would better serve to enhance the significance of the space, if executed well. Other modern interventions,

including the alterations to the roof vent, are in line with the space's optimum viable use as a civic space.

Mayour's Parlour and Corridor

Proposed works: Full conservation scheme to historical materials. Instatement of a kitchenette to an adjoining room of lesser significance (previously a WC but converted to an office).

Impacts: Wholly beneficial in terms of conservation scheme. Instatement of kitchenette and other services to the ancillary room of the Mayour's Parlour supports the optimum viable use of the space, enhancing the significance of its original intended use.

Access Stair S16

Proposed works: Instatement of a new staircase to allow for maintenance to the roof above the organ.

Impacts: Whilst the works will incur some less than substantial harm to historical fabric, this harm will be offset by that harm being mitigated by minimal structural supports and allowing for access for maintenance in that the historical fabric is not going to be accessible by the public. This will allow for the continued conservation of the roof above the organ, which has caused water ingress to interiors in the past.

Council chamber gallery

Proposed works: Alterations for accessibility, including instating an independent railing and levelling the floor to create an accessible platform. This would entail removal of the ties previously introduced to the balustrade. New railing to be frameless glass and would require storage of some of the pews.

Impacts: Some less than substantial harm will be incurred by levelling the floor and removing the pews. Although these things can be managed with appropriate conditions. Overall, the benefit of increasing accessibility enhances the significance of the building by allowing for the space to be continually used in line with its original purpose.

Circulation generally

Proposed works: Instating lighting and escape signage

Impacts: There is some less than substantial harm which will be incurred by instating escape lighting and signage. However, original finishes will be retained wherever possible. The harm incurred by this intervention is offset by the optimum viable use of the building as a whole.

Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing

Proposed works: The installation of 2 key service risers

Impacts: The location of the service risers has been discussed at length at the pre-application stages and have been strategically located to incur the minimum amount of harm to historical fabric as possible. The less than substantial harm to historic fabric is offset by the works aim to ensure the building's optimum viable use as the Town Hall.

Access

Proposed works: Level thresholds to be powered with powered opening doors to the exterior

Impacts: The less than substantial harm to the external appearance of the building would be offset by the public benefit of providing accessible entrances to the building in its continued use as the Town Hall.

Sustainability

Proposed works: An air source heat pump is to be installed to the rear car park.

Impacts: Whatever less than substantial harm could be perceived by the installation of an air source heat pump to the rear car park would be offset by ensuring the sustainability and optimum viable use of the Town Hall.

Highways

Proposed works: The heritage statement asserts that: "A new landscaping and parking scheme is being implemented as part of the consented Phase 2 works, this includes reordering of the existing parking provision. For the most part this would remain largely unchanged and the proposals for Phase 3 would have little bearing on the design, with the exception of the Air Source Heat Pump enclosure." This is noted, although the previous consent for the Phase 2 application (ref. 20/00615/FUL) has a condition which denotes that the exterior lighting plan should be submitted for approval prior to instatement: Condition 7: "No external lighting shall be installed on the site, including security lighting, unless a scheme for such lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority." No discharge of condition application for this condition can be found when searching the council's systems. Whilst the proposed plan is agreeable, subject to details of the lighting fixtures themselves, this point should be clarified.

Impacts: The proposed plan for the reconfiguration of the parking layout as part of the Phase 2 works has already been consented for, the heritage impacts of this aspect of the proposed have already been considered. Depending on details of the exterior lighting, this could have some less than substantial effect on the significance of the building. These details can be agreed upon via condition to ensure that appropriate materials and design are implemented.

Summary

In summary, and with regard to Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended), the proposed Phase 3 works has given regard to the desirability of preserving the Town Hall and features of special architectural and historic interest which it possesses. It is considered that the proposal will 'ensure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it' in accordance with the Act. The Phase 3 proposals, mainly for the conservation and enhancement of areas of the West Wing, are considered to make a positive contribution towards the conservation of the heritage asset.

In line with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework the nominal degree of the less than substantial harm identified is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. Overall it is considered that the proposals contained within this application will create an enhancement to the designated heritage asset to be achieved mainly through the conservation of key areas of significance, the improved accessibility to the building as a whole, and updating necessary services in areas which interact the least with significant historical fabric.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies P2 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In line with paragraph 196 of the NPPF the extent of the 'less than substantial harm' identified is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, specifically ensuring that the building can ultimately face a sustainable future which will assist in the future upkeep of the asset. Overall it is considered that the proposals contained within this application will provide an opportunity to enhance the designated heritage asset. Consideration has also been given to matters in respect of updating ecological surveys/licenses with regard to previously noted bird and bat activity. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Core Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan, as well as the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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. The works hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents listed in the document "23/00591/LBC – Schedule of Approved Plans" dated 27th September 2023.

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

3. Prior to any new landscaping works, including any associated preparatory works, the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - a. Photographic/physical samples of any new hard landscaping to be instated to the grounds outside Rochdale Town Hall
 - b. Product specification and physical samples of the finish to be applied to the enclosure surrounding the air source heat pump.
 - c. Product specification/photographic samples of any new protective fencing and planting containers to be instated
 - d. Full architectural details, product specification/photographic samples and of any external lighting (signage, lighting columns, lit bollards, etc.) features to be instated to the

The above shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure 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. Prior to their instatement, the following proposed elements to the building's exterior fabric shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
- a. Photographic/physical samples of any new slates to be instated to the Fire Station roof.
 - b. Full details/strategy of the man-safe system to be instated to the Fire Station roof.
 - c. Photographic/physical samples (product specification where available) of all components of the glazed railings and aluminium decking to be instated to the balcony of the Porte Cochere. Method statement for the maintenance of the glazed railings and roof coverings below the proposed aluminium decking.
 - d. Photographic/physical samples (product specification where available) of any new glazing, including any manifestations, frames, kick plates, handles, stainless steel barriers, etc. to be instated to the external entrances.
 - e. Photographic/physical samples of all new fixings to antique doors to be retained at external entrances.

The above shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure 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. Also to ensure that the appearance and longevity of the Porte Cochere and Fire Station roof are maintained, in line with the building's conservation. These are in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to their instatement, the following proposed elements to the building's interior fabric shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
- a. Full product specification and architectural details of the proposed secondary glazing to the council chamber windows, including a cross-sectional drawing to detail the depth of the window reveal with the secondary glazing in situ.
 - b. Full product specification/photographic samples of new furniture to be instated to the Council Chamber and Gallery. Additionally, full details of the storing location and method, and any plans for re-use elsewhere in the building, of all furniture to be removed from the Council Chamber and Gallery.
 - c. Full product specification and/or photographic details of frameless glass balustrades and guardings to be instated to the Council Chamber Gallery, including all fixings, components and glazing.
 - d. Full product specification (including required finish) and locations of any new escape lighting or signage.

The above shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

Procedure Statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirement in Paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF.

Notes for Applicant:

Bat Surveys

Best practice guidance indicates that the results of bat surveys are only valid for a limited period (1 – 2 years) as the suitability of structures for bats can alter over time. In this case if works have not commenced under licence during the lifespan of any permission if granted, then an updated bat survey should be required including 2 activity surveys during the maternity season. The update survey should include the details of any additional mitigation over and above what has already been provided.

Report Author Christiana Shovlin