

Agenda Item A9	Committee Date 15 October 2018	Application Number 18/00920/LB
Application Site Town Hall Dalton Square Lancaster Lancashire		Proposal Listed building application for re-plastering and redecoration, installation and removal of partition walls and suspended ceilings, installation of a bar and chair store and repair works and re-flooring to the Ashton Hall and gallery, removal of reception counter and installation of a replacement counter in main entrance, installing new and upgrading existing ground, first and second floor toilets and kitchenettes
Name of Applicant Mr Frank Sedgwick		Name of Agent Mr Frank Sedgwick
Decision Target Date 21 September 2018		Reason For Delay Amended plans and committee cycle
Case Officer		Mr Robert Clarke
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approval

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, Lancaster City Council is the owner of the subject property, and as such the application must be determined by the Planning Committee.

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

1.1 The application site is Lancaster Town Hall, situated on Dalton Square within the historic centre of Lancaster. The Town Hall is a Grade II* Listed Building and is made up of sandstone ashlar under slate roofing. The site is also within the Lancaster Conservation Area.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 This application seeks listed building consent for a large amount of works to the ground, mezzanine, first and second floor as set out below:

Ground floor works

Main entrance – Removal of existing reception desk and telephone booth (the latter is proposed but does not require Listed building consent). Creation of a break out area including the installation of a new counter.

Postal Room – Removal of modern plaster board walls and suspended ceiling. Redecoration.

Areas 1 (stairwell in south eastern corner of building), 4 (stairwell in south western corner of building), 6 (stairwell to western part of building), 9 (stairwell in south western corner of building), 12 (ladies toilets within central section of building), 13 (men's toilets within central section of building)

– Removal of defective plaster and installation and replacement lime plaster and re-decoration, replacement of stone door thresholds and refurbishment of toilet facilities.

Mezzanine level works

Dressing room 1 and 2 – Refurbishment of both dressing rooms including replacement ceiling plaster, damaged window panes, laminate flooring, replacement doors and repair of skirting. Refurbishment of toilet facilities.

First floor works

Ashton Hall – Repair and refurbishment of the hall including the replacement of the existing bar with new bar facilities. Installation of a chair store and replacement laminate flooring to the main hall and gallery.

Areas 2 (stairwell in south eastern corner of building), 5 (stairwell in south western corner of building), 7 (stairwell to western part of building), 8 (corridor to western part of building), 9 (stairwell in south western corner of building), 15 (ladies toilets within central section of building) – Removal of defective plaster, skirting and coving. Installation of replacement lime plaster and re-decoration. Refurbishment of toilet facilities.

Second floor works

Areas 3 (stairwell in south eastern corner of building), 9 (stairwell in south western corner of building), 11 (gallery in Ashton Hall) – Removal of defective plaster. Installation of replacement lime plaster and re-decoration.

Creation of second floor disabled toilet facilities and kitchenette facilities

External works

Refurbishment of all external doors

3.0 Site History

3.1 The Town Hall has an extensive planning history, which largely relates to matters of maintenance and repair. This application is a resubmission of a previously withdrawn application 18/00371/LB.

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Consultee	Response
Conservation Team	Supports the application subject to the agreement of details to be agreed via condition
Historic England	No objection
The Victorian Society	No response received during the statutory consultation period
National Amenity Society	No response received during the statutory consultation period
Cadent Gas	No objection standing advice provided

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 **No responses** received during the statutory consultation period

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following 2 Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enabled progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. The DPDs were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 15 May 2018 for independent Examination, which is scheduled to commence in early January 2019. If the Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council in mid-2019.

The **Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD** will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual 'saved' land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2017, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The **Review of the Development Management DPD** updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft 'Review' document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the 'Review' will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 124 – Requiring Good Design

Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

6.3 Development Management DPD

DM20 – Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages

DM30 – Development Affecting Listed Buildings

DM31 – Development affecting Conservation Areas

DM32 – The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets

DM35 – Key Design Principles

6.4 Lancaster District Core Strategy Saved Policies (adopted July 2008)

SC1 – Sustainable Development

SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The key considerations arising from the proposal are:

- Principle of the development;
- Scale, Design and impact on the Character of the Listed Building;

7.2 Principle of Development

7.2.1 This proposal forms phase 3 of a package of works throughout the Town Hall all of which form essential maintenance and repair works as well as suitable works to update existing facilities. Historically the building has experienced significant water ingress which has resulted in the deterioration of various rooms and stairwells. The sources of this water ingress have now been resolved and these works seek to remedy the damage which resulted. Furthermore, refurbishment of various rooms and toilet and kitchen facilities will allow the continued use of the building as a working environment which is coherent with the building's conservation. As a result the principle of the works proposed are fully supported subject to the agreement of material details.

7.3 Scale, Design and impact on the Character of the Listed Building

- 7.3.1 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Listed building, a Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by policies DM30, DM31 and DM32.
- 7.3.2 When initially submitted, some concerns were raised by both the Conservation Officer and Historic England regarding the lack of detail provided as to the re-plastering, redecoration works and the proposed materials. In the interests of retaining as much of the existing historic plaster as possible, further surveys have now been undertaken of these spaces and measurements of each area that require re-plastering have been provided. These details are considered to be acceptable. Furthermore, it had been proposed to use vinyl based paints for the redecoration works, which was considered inappropriate for historic buildings as they reduce the breathability of the masonry resulting in dampness within the fabric. Water based paints are more suitable in such environments as they allow the fabric of the building to breath. The use of such paints has now been agreed, however, to ensure all materials are appropriate given the significance of the building, details of all paints, plasters and putty fillers to be used will be conditioned.
- 7.3.3 In addition to the redecoration works, works to the ground floor include the installation of a new counter and moveable tables and chairs to the main entrance hall and removal of the existing telephone booth. The removal of the existing reception desk is supported as this is considered an unsympathetic design. The principle of the replacement desk is also supported, subject to conditioning the details of the design of the furniture given the importance and significance of this space. The tables and chairs are to be moveable and as such they do not require Listed building consent and can be removed when events are held and this space is required.
- 7.3.4 Within the Ashton Hall, the existing bar to the rear of the space is to be removed and replaced with a new oak timber bar. The updating of this facility is fully supported subject to a condition requiring the final finish detail of the timber. Adjacent to this, a new chair store will be installed so as to provide an opportunity to obscure the existing chair storage which is present in this space. The initial proposal included a store that partially obscured two windows. This was considered to result in unjustifiable harm to the appearance of this space. Furthermore, the removal of the existing telephone booth which lies within the corner of this room was not supported. The revised proposal now features a much reduced chair store unit that allows for the window openings above to be unaffected. The phone booth is now also to be retained. Finally the existing laminate flooring to the main hall and gallery above will be replaced with new flooring, details of which are to be conditioned.
- 7.3.5 The external doors are currently in a poor state of repair. Historically posters and signs have been attached using pins, staples and adhesive which has resulted in deterioration of the timber and the units becoming more susceptible to weathering. The doors are to be repaired and re-varnished which will improve their appearance within the street scene which is fully supported.
- 7.3.6 In accordance with Paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the majority of the works proposed are considered to result in a neutral impact upon the significance of this designated heritage asset. The works will allow for the repair of numerous spaces after damage resulting from water ingress and the refurbishment of the working environment which is considered to be coherent with the preservation and continued use of this building. Subject to the agreement of final details of materials and finishes the application is supported for approval.
- 7.3.7 The works to the main entrance to facilitate the proposed break out area are considered to result in less than substantial harm to the significance of this space. It is considered that this harm will be outweighed by the sympathetic and respectful design of the proposed furniture. As a result, this aspect of the proposal is considered to accord with paragraph 196 of the NPPF. The removal of the existing phone booth from this space is unfortunate due to its communal value, however, it is a relatively modern addition to this space and does not require listed building consent to be removed. The applicants are to be advised that, due to its value, the booth should be retained elsewhere in the building.

8.0 Planning Obligations

- 8.1 There are no planning obligations to consider as part of this application.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed works will not adversely affect the character of the Listed building or the Conservation Area, and comply with the requirements of policies DM30, DM31, DM32 and DM35 of the Development Plan Document. Furthermore, the scheme has been assessed against paragraphs 192, 193 and 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework and is considered to be acceptable. As such, the Members are advised that this scheme can be supported subject to conditions regarding the agreement of specific details.

Recommendation

That Listed Building Consent **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard listed building consent timescale
2. Works to accords with the approved plans
3. Details and samples of materials and finishes to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of works
4. Plastering works in accordance with submitted report

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm that it has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been taken having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance.

Background Papers

None