

West Area Planning Committee

7th January 2014

Application Number: 13/02687/CT3

Decision Due by: 16th December 2013

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to upgrade and refurbish existing toilets involving removal of walls and partitions and formation of lobby and doorways

Site Address: Town Hall St Aldate's– **Appendix 1**

Ward: Holywell

Agent: N/A

Applicant: Oxford City Council

Recommendation: Approve listed building consent

For the following reasons:

- 1 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed regarding retention of historic doors and windows, new ventilation and lighting, would ensure the internal works will not harm the character and appearance of the listed building. There are no amenity issues that weigh against approval and the development complies with the relevant Oxford Local Plan and Core Strategy policies.
- 2 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed, would enhance the special character and appearance of listed building. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised by English Heritage in response to consultation and publicity.

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Commencement of works LB/CAC consent
- 2 LB/CAC consent - approved plans
3. LB/CAC specific agreed amended plans -3771-02 A - 3771-07 A, 18/11/2013, 18/11/2013,
- 4 7 days notice to LPA
- 5 LB notice of completion
- 6 Further works - fabric of LB - fire regs
- 7 Repair of damage after works
- 8 Walls/openings to match adjoining
- 9 careful removal and retention/reuse of doors and window glass
- 10 further details a) new lighting units, b) external louvers c) new handrail, d) fixture and finish of new suspended ceiling

Main Planning Policies:

Core Strategy

CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

The application affects a Grade II* listed building within the Central Conservation Area

Relevant Site History:

11/01299/CT3 - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to convert cloakroom into museum retail area and information point, involving new security screen, new counters and changes to suspended ceiling – **APPROVED**

05/02296/LBC - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to provide a platform lift within an existing store with a new opening into the Drill Hall Corridor, to overcome the difference in floor levels. Ground floor adjacent to cloakrooms (works under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) - **APPROVED**

Representations Received:English Heritage – have raised no objections

Statutory and other Consultees:

English Heritage – have raised no objection

Officers Assessment:

Application site:

1. The Town Hall is listed Grade II*, built between 1893 -97, the fourth generation municipal building to occupy the site. The list description notes that the architectural form of the Town Hall, together with its high quality materials, fixtures, and fittings, civic pride and aspirations are expressed in an architecturally impressive manner that survives very well.
2. The building was one of the best works of the architect Henry .T. Hare, for whom town halls and libraries became a true trademark. The design made excellent use of the available site and positioned the major rooms at first floor level, marked by tall, high windows on the St Aldates frontage.
3. The Main Hall and Assembly Room are placed centrally, with City Council Offices and Council Chamber to the left. The Museum of Oxford and shop now occupy the area to the right of the main entrance hall leading to the Drill Hall corridor, Town Hall café, exhibition space and other offices behind the St Aldates' frontage.

Heritage Significance

4. The Town Hall is one of Oxford's best known buildings and contributes to the historic skyline and is the fourth generation of municipal building to occupy the site.

5. The building is designed by an architect of national and local significance and it is highly valued by local residents, visitor and business community.
6. The Town Hall is grade II* listed and has high architectural, aesthetic and historical significance. Its continued use for the purpose for which it was originally designed, also has significance and is rare. The building is not as originally designed and its continuous adaptation to meet the needs of the local community and growing business needs is an important part of its interest.

Proposed works:

7. Works are proposed along the corridor leading to the Drill Hall Corridor. This area was once used to hang cloaks until the museum shop was formed in 2011. This involved the removal of internal walls and insertion of new bespoke bi-fold doors to secure the shop out of hours. A new platform lift and new opening into the Drill Hall Corridor at the east end of the corridor beyond the shop area was also approved in 1995.
8. On the left-hand side of the corridor are the toilets. The toilets were refurbished in 1990 and 2005 including new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and baby changing facilities formed. A new locker room was also established for the town hall keepers within the original footprint of the Gents Cloakroom.
9. The number of people using the toilets has increased since 2005 and additional toilets are needed to meet demand when large functions are held at the Town Hall. The current toilets are also looking tired and are in need of refurbishment. The works will increase female toilets from 11 to 16 cubicles and from 6 to 16 wash basins. The Gents will increase from 10 to 11 urinals, 3 to 5 cubicles and 6 to 12 wash basins
10. Works are proposed to remove 20th century partitions and insert new partitions and form new openings through existing brick walls to improve upon the existing layout and increase sanitation provision for users. This will involve the removal of modern partitions which form the Accessible toilet and baby changing facilities and partitions and doors which form the lobby areas to both toilets. In addition, new partitions will be inserted and openings formed through existing brick work to improve the existing layout. .
11. As part of the works additional ventilation is required in the male toilets and replacement louvers in the female toilets. In the Gents this will involve inserting new window louvres in the top of the existing windows and replacing the existing modern suspended ceiling. The works will also involve the formation of new doorways to access the new facilities from the corridor and new lobby area and handrail to the doorway to Drill Hall corridor to improve fire safety measures and access to the Drill Hall Corridor.

Assessment:

12. The refurbishment of the existing toilets at the Town Hall involves remodelling the current facilities to increase provision to meet current demand. These

toilets are the main toilets on the ground floor for staff and visitors to the Town Hall. There has been an increase in the number of people using these facilities since they were last refurbished in 2005. This has been due in part from the closure of other public facilities in the City and the increased in the number of visitors to the Town Hall to visit the Museum and Shop and Town Hall café and attending large public and private functions at the Town Hall. The increase in provision will overcome this shortfall.

13. The existing units and décor is also very tired and stained. The new wall tiling, white ceiling tiles and flooring will refresh and brighten the facilities. The new ventilation system will provide fresh air to the toilets and improve air quality for users. The new fresh air intake system will also comply with current building regulations and efficiency.
14. The new doorways to the Male toilet and Accessible facilities maintain access from the Corridor and are discretely sited along the wall to avoid the existing piers and display cases. The new doorways will be a consistent size and design to match the existing two panelled door to the Ladies. The display cases will be retained and repositioned and fixed into existing piers which will be marginally widened to 1.6m. This will align the display cases and improve the visual appearance of the corridor.
15. The formation of openings in the walls which form the Keeper's room will make better use of the space to provide additional sanitation facilities for staff and visitors to the Town Hall. The retention of sections of the existing brick wall and four corner columns will show the original plan form. A condition is appropriate to ensure that the existing 19th century 2 panelled door to the Keeper's room is retained and reused in the new scheme. The other door from the entrance lobby will be locked and retained in situ.
16. The introduction of a new ventilation system will comply with current building regulations and improve facilities and comfort for users. The two new ventilation louvres will only be visible from rooms overlooking the enclosed courtyard to the left.
17. The insertion of the louvres will retain the design of the windows which has both mullions and transoms. A condition is recommended to ensure the careful removal and reuse/storage of the existing window glass as appropriate and further details of the design, material and fixing of the new louvres.
18. The formation of a new fire lobby at the end of the corridor will improve fire safety within the building and the additional handrail will improve access to and from the Drill Hall Corridor for visitors and staff. The new handrail will be brass to match the handrail on the Main Staircase. Amended plans have been received to infill the shallow recess to the left of the doorway to overcome the gap and to fix the new handrail to. The door to the Drill Hall Corridor will be carefully removed and stored/reused within the building.

Conclusion:

19. The proposal is required to allow full public use of the building and meet current demand. The proposals have been designed to minimise or eliminate any adverse impacts on the heritage significance of the listed building. There are no other planning issues to consider; the development accords with the relevant development plan policies and approval is recommended.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant listed building consent, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to approve, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Background Papers: 13/02687/CT3

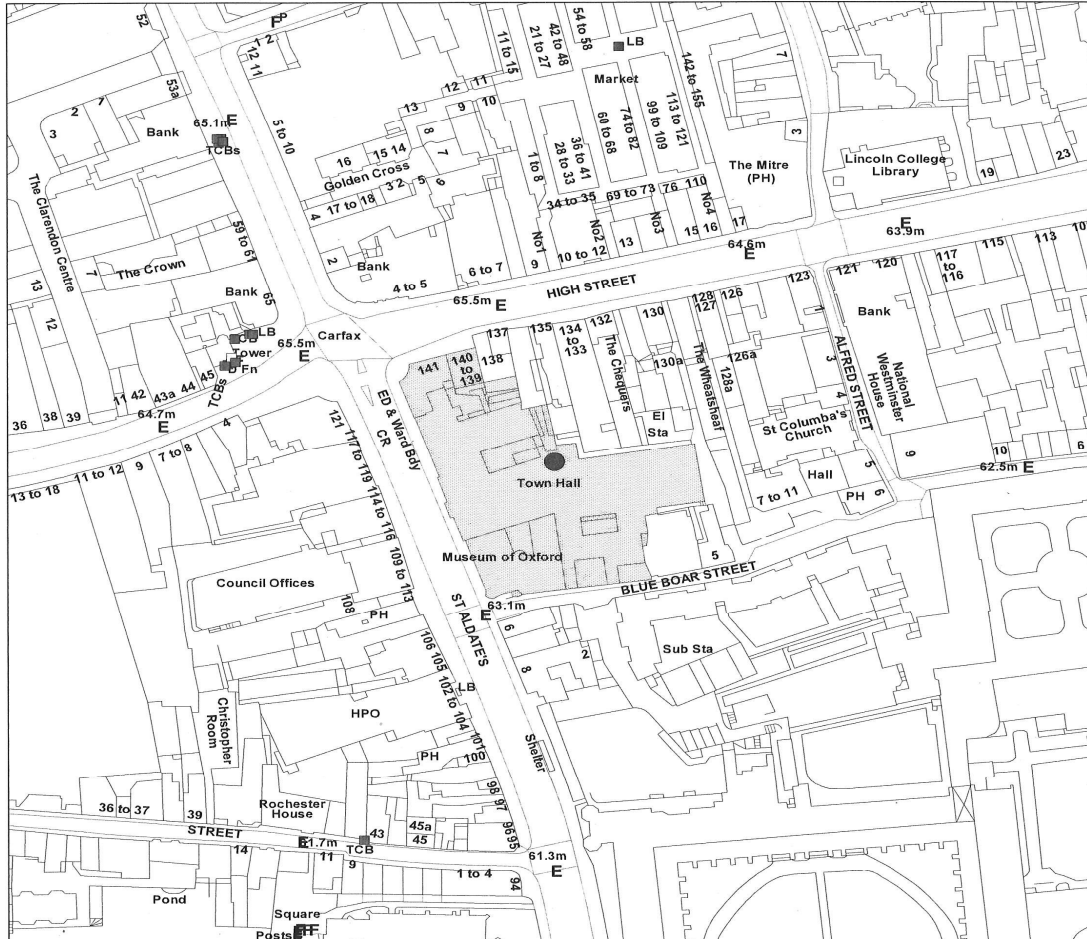
Contact Officer: Sarah Billam

Extension: 2640

Date: 19th December 2013

Town Hall - Toilet Refurbishment

13/02687/CT3



Scale : 1:1500

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Organisation	Not Set
Department	Not Set
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