

Application No: [W 23 / 0382 LB](#)

Town/Parish Council: Leamington Spa  
Case Officer: Lucy Hammond

Registration Date: 13/03/23  
Expiry Date: 08/05/23

01926 456534 lucy.hammond@warwickdc.gov.uk

**Town Hall, Parade, Leamington Spa, CV32 4AT**

Proposed new steps and ramps to the building's main entrance; adaptation of internal areas, corridor spaces, main staircase and reception; demolition and reconstruction of an existing two-storey structure at the rear. FOR Warwick District Council

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This application is being presented to Committee because it is an application made by the District Council and relates to a District Council owned building.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That listed building consent is approved subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

**DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

This is a listed building consent application which proposes the use of the Town Hall as a creative hub. The works required to facilitate this comprise improvements to the main entrance of the building through the replacement of the existing ramp and revealing the original steps together with the demolition of an existing two storey structure at the rear, which is not an original part of the building, and its replacement with an improved and more fit for purpose two storey structure (to accommodate improved toilet facilities and a lift). This operational development is also subject to a separate planning application which is being considered simultaneously to this application. Further works are also proposed which involve internal works of refurbishment, reconfiguration and other alteration. These additional works are covered by this listed building consent application.

It is worth noting here, that during the course of this current application, revised plans have been submitted; the previously proposed new entrance in the Livery Street elevation of the Town Hall has been removed from the plans and the supporting statements amended accordingly to reflect the change. The rest of the proposals remain as per the plans originally submitted and are unaffected by the amendment.

**THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION**

The application relates to the Town Hall in Royal Leamington Spa; an imposing Grade II listed municipal building dated 1882-1884 constructed from pinkish-red brick with sandstone ashlar dressings and a Welsh slate roof, partly fish-scaled.

The building contains many architectural details and flourishes incorporating Tudor and French baroque elements and there is a central projecting portico to the ground floor, fronting Parade, above which sits pairs of Tuscan pilasters and paired Corinthian columns, with single columns between windows and decorated frieze with masks. A clock tower sits on the building's southern end.

The Town Hall is centrally placed in the town centre and is within the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area as well as the Creative Quarter. Internally, the building provides a range of spaces and uses for the Town Council's offices, the University of Warwick, Motionhouse (dance company), Leamington Music and the Post Office. There are also several hireable rooms and leased offices as well as spaces, such as the Council Chamber, for District Council functions.

While the building's main entrance fronts Parade to the west, it has a further entrance (not currently in use) to its southern elevation fronting Regent Grove. To the north side is Livery Street, otherwise known as Regent Court, which is a pedestrianised route through to Regent Street to the north, characterised by restaurants and other dining facilities. At the rear of the Town Hall, there is an area for car parking which is accessed off Regent Grove to the south.

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

While there are several planning records for the Town Hall, over approximately the last thirty years, these are mostly Listed Building Consents which are primarily concerned with internal works, refurbishment, alterations to doors and so on and as such are of no direct relevance to the proposals being considered here.

### **RELEVANT POLICIES**

- National Planning Policy Framework

#### Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029

- HE1 - Protection of Statutory Heritage Assets

### **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

**Royal Leamington Spa Town Council:** Support; this will achieve the aim of reinvigorating the Town Hall, create a creative space while enhancing public use of the building and will result in improved accessibility.

**WDC Conservation:** No objection, subject to conditions

**Conservation Advisory Forum:** Generally supportive of the overall aim to reinvigorate the Town Hall. In terms of detail, these are primarily considered acceptable; the originally proposed Livery Street entrance was seen by some as a potentially positive move, but raised by others that its purpose was unclear and potentially unjustified in terms of heritage harm.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The main issues relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:-

- Principle of development; and
- Impact on heritage assets;

### Principle of development

Policy HE1 of the Local Plan expects development proposals to have appropriate regard to the significance of designated heritage assets. Where any potential harm may be caused, the degree of harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.

The proposed works affect both the fabric and setting of a prominent Grade II listed building. Such works are considered acceptable in principle subject to their impact on the listed building and its setting being acceptable and not resulting in any material harm. This is considered in the following section of this report.

### Impact on heritage assets

Considerable importance and weight should be given to the duties set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when making decisions that affect listed buildings and conservation areas respectively. These duties affect the weight to be given to the factors involved.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, "In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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."

Policy HE1 of the Local Plan expects development proposals to have appropriate regard to the significance of designated heritage assets. Where any potential harm may be caused, the degree of harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.

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. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Following an amendment being made to the plans as originally submitted, a new entrance door proposed in the Livery Street elevation of the Town Hall no longer forms part of the proposed works for which planning permission and listed building consent are being sought. The remainder of the proposed works which are mostly internal but also involve the demolition and rebuilding of a rear two storey

extension that accommodates the toilets and lift as well as some improvements to the main entrance steps and disabled ramp, have been confirmed by the Principal Conservation Officer as works to which there is no objection on heritage grounds.

The rear elevation of the Town Hall is arguably of much lower sensitivity, appearing relatively utilitarian at present. The proposed lift and extension, with decorative brickwork, offers some degree of architectural visual interest and is considered to be a sympathetic addition to the building's evolution. There is sufficient justification presented in the supporting documentation for a lift of this scale and nature.

On the building's frontage, the proposed new entrance and ramp would necessitate the removal of two original stone steps from outside the front entrance. Whilst these have not been visible to officers during the course of the application, it is the intention of the applicant to ensure that a site investigation is undertaken, involving the removal of a section of the existing ramp in order to document the steps subject to removal. Officers are satisfied that a carefully worded condition requiring the details of what should be submitted and the timeframe within which this investigative work should be undertaken adequately deals with this aspect of the proposed works. Consequently, there are no heritage objections, in principle, to this part of the development.

Overall, and in light of the amended plans received showing the omission of the Livery Street entrance, officers are of the view that the proposed works involving the improved main entrance and the demolition and rebuilding of the two storey structure at the rear would result in no harm to the significance of the heritage asset, principally the Grade II listed building and its setting.

Since no material harm has been identified to the significance of the heritage asset it is not necessary to engage the public benefits test. The application is considered to comply with Policy HE1 and in making this assessment, officers have had regard to the weight that should be given to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of the heritage assets.

### **Summary/Conclusion**

The principle of development which involves the change of use of the Town Hall to form a 'creative hub' through predominantly internal works to facilitate multi-functional spaces together with improved access to the building's frontage and a re-built two storey extension at the rear to accommodate improved toilet facilities and a lift is considered acceptable having regard to the relevant provisions of Local Plan Policy HE1.

The impacts on the heritage asset, both internally and externally, have been carefully considered and following amendments being made to the plans showing the omission of the originally proposed Livery Street entrance officers are now satisfied that the improvements to the main entrance together with the works proposed to the rear would represent a sympathetic addition to the building and consequently would result in no harm to the significance of the heritage asset; principally the fabric of the Grade II listed building and its setting.

Overall, and having regard to the above considerations, officers recommend that listed building consent be approved subject to the conditions set out below.

- 1 The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this consent. **Reason:** To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).
  
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and the following approved drawings:-

241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-3002 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-3003 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-3004 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-3006 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-B1-DR-A-1010 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-B1-DR-A-2000 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-3000 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-3001 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-RF-DR-A-1014 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-RF-DR-A-2004 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1110 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1112 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1113 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-2100 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-2102 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-2103 Rev.P03; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-5001 Rev.P03; and 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-5002 Rev.P03, and specification contained therein, submitted on 13 March 2023;

241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-1012 Rev.P05; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-2002 Rev.P05; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-2302 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-01-DR-A-2402 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-02-DR-A-1013 Rev.P05; and 241990-PUR-00-02-DR-A-2003 Rev.P05; and specification contained therein, submitted on 27 April 2023; and

241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-1011 Rev.P06; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-2001 Rev.P06; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-2301 Rev.P05; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-2401 Rev.P05; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-3005 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-3007 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1111 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1210 Rev.P04; 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-2101 Rev.P04; and 241990-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-2200 Rev.P05; and specification contained therein, submitted on 24 May 2023.

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development for this listed building in accordance with Policies HE1 and BE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.

- 3 No development shall be carried out above slab level unless and until samples of the external facing materials to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **Reason:** To ensure a high standard of design and appearance for this Listed Building, and to satisfy Policy HE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
  - 4 No development shall be carried out above slab level unless and until large scale details of internal doors, at a scale of 1:5 (including details of materials) have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with such approved details. **Reason:** To ensure a high standard of design and appearance for this Listed Building, and to satisfy Policy HE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
  - 5 During the works, if hidden original stone steps to the front entrance are revealed they should be retained in-situ. If these are deemed to be beyond repair, the steps should be recorded and suitable replacement steps agreed with the Conservation Officer. **Reason:** To secure and safeguard the provision for inspection and recording of matters of historical importance associated with the building that may be lost in the course of works in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
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