

Application No: 23/3998N

Location: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, EARLE STREET, CREWE, CW1 2BJ

Proposal: The proposal is to convert the Municipal Building Annex into flexible workspaces. Works will include the demolition and remodelling of internal walls, reconfiguration of toilet facilities and replacement of ceilings. Externally, 5 windows and 2 doors will be removed to make way for a curtain wall and new frontage to the Annex via the courtyard. The works will also involve remodelling the existing and under-utilised service yard into an outdoor courtyard

Applicant: Tim Allen, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 15-Jan-2024

## **SUMMARY**

The design of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, Impact upon the host Grade II Listed Building (neutral impact). The proposed development would comply with the relevant policies of the development plan.

The impact upon residential amenity and the highway impact is considered to be acceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE with conditions**

## **PROPOSAL**

This proposal is to use the Municipal Buildings Annex as a Technology and Design Innovation Centre (TADIC) to provide flexible, co-working office space for individuals and small start-up companies.

The proposed works are as follows:

- Re-configuration of the internal space (office space, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities)
- Re-configuration of the toilet facilities
- Alterations to the south and west elevations (curtain walling and a new entrance)
- Remodelled fenestration

- Landscaped rear courtyard
- Bin storage/cycle storage to be redesigned and relocated
- Changes to the parking layout
- Minor alterations in the form of roof ventilation terminals, through wall vents and a stainless steel vent.

This application is accompanied by Listed Building Consent application 23/4000N.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Municipal Buildings is a Grade II listed building which lies within Crewe Town Centre.

The Listing for the property states as follows;

*‘GV II Council Offices, 1902-1905 by H T Hare in English Baroque style. Yellow sandstone ashlar with stone slate gable roof. 2½ storeys and basement, 5 bays. 3 centre bays recessed for 2 storeys, flanked and separated by giant unfluted Ionic columns. Small Tuscan column mullions to ground floor windows, in outer bays. Deeply recessed semi-circular headed entrance with wrought iron gates and oak screen with double doors. This is flanked by timber mullion and centre-arched transome windows with matching archivolt and cartouche keystones. Pairs of large reclining figures, carved in relief by F.E.E.Schenck, surmount the three centre openings. Cross windows with stone eared architraves at first floor level and segmental bracketted balconies to outer bays. Dentilled and bracketted eaves cornice. Dormer windows to second floor centre bays with small pediments above and fronted by balustraded parapet. End bay windows are bullseyes with egg and dart and festoon treatment. Copings to gables, stone chimneys and cupola with vane and locomotive finial. Interior: Tuscan columns in entrance hall, York stone geometrical staircase, marble Ionic columns and a window in Venetian style in the Council Chamber. Hardwood doors, in elaborate frames, and plasterwork based on festoons and egg and dart moulds’*

This application relates to the Municipal Buildings Annex which is a three-storey office block constructed in the 1990s.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

23/4000N - The proposal is to convert the Municipal Building Annex into flexible workspaces. Works will include the demolition and remodelling of internal walls, reconfiguration of toilet facilities and replacement of ceilings. Externally, 5 windows and 2 doors will be removed to make way for a curtain wall and new frontage to the Annex via the courtyard. The works will also involve remodelling the existing and under-utilised service yard into an outdoor courtyard – Application Undetermined

23/2368N - Listed building consent for proposals for repair of Crewe Municipal Buildings main facade windows, doors and wrought iron railing and gates including replacement of two existing flag poles and associated temporary works – Application Undetermined

23/2367N - Proposals for repair of Crewe Municipal Buildings main facade windows, doors and wrought iron railing and gates including replacement of two existing flag poles and associated temporary works – Application Undetermined

20/2606N - Listed Building Consent for Installation of new and replacement CCTV cameras within Original Part of Crewe Municipal Buildings. Works consist of installation of new cameras and cable routes – Application Undetermined

12/1730N - Proposals to provide access to the principal elevation of the Municipal Building by re-grading the external path and integrating a Sesame access lift to the internal flight of steps. Refurbishment and minor alterations to the front range of ground floor suite of rooms to incorporate the registrations department. The internal refurbishment work includes redecoration to all the front range of ground floor rooms and reconfiguration to allow access to the suite of rooms to be designated as the registrations department – Approved 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012

11/1024N - Listed Building Consent to Provide Access to the Principal Elevation of the Municipal Building by Integrating a Sesame Access Lift to the External Flight of Steps and a Second Sesame Lift to the Internal Flight of Steps. Refurbishment and Minor Alterations to the Front Range of Ground Floor Suite of Rooms to Incorporate the Registrations Department. The Internal Refurbishment Work Includes Redecoration to all the Front Range of Ground Floor Rooms and Reconfiguration to Allow Access to the Suite of Rooms to be Designated as the Registrations Department – Approved 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

11/1023N - Proposal to Provide Access to the Principal Elevation of the Municipal Building by Integrating a Sesame Access Lift to the External Flight of Steps and a Second Sesame Lift to the Internal Flight of Steps. Refurbishment and Minor Alterations to the Front Range of Ground Floor Suite of Rooms to Incorporate the Registrations Department. The Internal Refurbishment Work includes Redecoration to all the Front Range of Ground Floor Rooms and Reconfiguration to Allow Access to the Suite of Rooms to be Designated as the Registrations Department – Approved 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011

P06/0069 - Listed Building Consent for Alterations to Front and Rear Entrances and Internal Alterations – Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006

P98/0179 - LBC for attaching notice board to front elevation – Approved 27<sup>th</sup> April 1998

P98/0080 - Removal of condition 6 on advertisement consent for sign boards and addition of extra sign – Approved 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998

P96/0020 - LBC for handrail to front entrance steps – Approved 29<sup>th</sup> February 1996

P94/0366 - LBC Brass lettering – Approved 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1994

P94/0335 - LBC Substation – Approved 30<sup>th</sup> June 1994

P94/0334 – Substation – Approved 30<sup>th</sup> June 1994

7/18455 - Three storey office extension to rear and associated car parking – Approved 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1990

7/18499 - LBC for demolition of corn exchange, three storey office extension to rear and internal alterations. To municipal buildings – Approved 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1990

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles  
SE1 - Design  
SE7 – The Historic Environment  
SE8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy  
EG1 – Economic Prosperity  
EG4 – Existing and Allocated Employment Sites  
EG5 – Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce  
LPS1 – Central Crewe

### **Site Allocations and Development Policies Document**

PG9 – Settlement Boundaries  
GEN1 – Design Principles  
HER1 – Heritage Assets  
HER4 – Listed Buildings  
HOU12 – Amenity  
RET10 – Crewe Town Centre  
INF3 – Highways Safety and Access  
INF9 – Utilities

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

There is no Neighbourhood Plan in Crewe.

### **National Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Head of Strategic Infrastructure:** The Highways impact of the proposal will be minimal, and no objection is raised.

**Environment Health:** Contaminated land and informatives suggested.

## **VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Crewe Town Council:** No comments received.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

No representations received.

## **APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

The site lies within the Crewe Settlement Boundary and is a Grade II Listed Building. The principle of the proposed works is acceptable subject to the consideration of the impact upon the Grade II Listed Building, the design of the proposed development, the highways impact and the impact upon residential amenity.

It should be noted that the use of the Municipal Buildings Annex as a Technology and Design Innovation Centre (TADIC), would not represent a change of use. The planning application will consider whether the external works proposed (alterations to the elevations of the annex, alterations to the courtyard layout and the provision of the bin store and cycle store). The internal works do not require planning permission and will be determined as part of the application for Listed Building Consent.

### **Design and Impact upon the Grade II Listed Building**

The NPPF paragraph 197 identifies that

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Para 199 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Para 200 goes on to clarify that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should have clear and convincing justification for the harm.

Policy SE 7 of the CELPS states that *'The character, quality and diversity of the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced. All new development should seek to avoid harm to heritage assets and make a positive contribution to the character of Cheshire East's historic and built environment, including the setting of assets and where appropriate, the wider historic environment'*.

Policy HER4 of the SADPD follows the wording of the NPPF and states that when considering development proposals or works affecting a listed building, including alterations, extensions and changes of use, in line with its statutory duty, the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

The application is subject to an accompanying Listed Building Consent 22/4000N.

The application proposes the following changes to the elevations of the building;

- East facing elevation – Provision of a ‘Levelling Up Funding’ plaque, and re-positioning of the emergency assembly point signage.
- West facing elevation – Replace three windows, one door and one air conditioning unit with a new glazed curtain wall and a new entrance.
- South facing elevation – Replace two windows with a new glazed curtain wall and the removal of five air conditioning units at ground floor level.
- Provision of new plant to the flat roofed section and a new vent to the south facing roof slope. Roof ventilation terminals would be added to the north and east facing roof slopes.
- Through wall vents would be added to the north, south and west elevations.

In addition to the elevational changes to the building, the courtyard would be redesigned, and this would include:

- A reduction in the number of parking spaces from 8 to 4
- The provision of an external seating area for staff
- New entrance ramp
- Landscaping (planters and one new tree)
- Bin storage
- Cycle storage

The Conservation Officer has stated that she has no objection to the proposed development. The scheme will open up the building and allow more light to enter, whilst not impacting on the existing character of the building. The details of all new external materials and window and door details will be controlled via the imposition of planning conditions.

The proposal would have a neutral impact upon the Grade II Listed Building and is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design. The proposed development would comply with the relevant policies of the development plan.

## **Residential Amenity**

The proposed works are relatively minor and would not impact upon residential amenity and relate to an existing office building within Crewe Town Centre. There are no residential properties in close proximity to the site and the impact upon residential amenity would be acceptable. The proposed development complies with Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

## **Highways**

The site is located within the centre of Crewe and is a short walk from frequent bus services, public car parks, and a number of services and amenities.

The existing courtyard includes 8 parking spaces, and this would be reduced to 4 spaces as part of this application. Given the sustainable location of the site, the small number of spaces which would be lost and the amount of parking available within a short distance from the site the parking provision is considered to be acceptable.

There will be no change of use of the building as part of this application, no increase in floor area and no alteration to the access to the public highway. Refuse collection and deliveries can continue

as existing. The highways impact of the proposed development would be minimal and there is no objection to the application.

The proposed development would comply with Policy INF3 of the SADPD and CO2 of the CELPS.

### **Trees**

There is one small tree located within the courtyard. This tree is shown as being retained and as such there would be no arboricultural impacts as part of this development.

### **Landscaping**

The application provides for additional landscaping within the courtyard (planters and one new tree). In order to ensure that an acceptable landscaping scheme is provided these details will be controlled via the imposition of a planning condition.

### **Contaminated Land**

The application site has a history of warehouse use, and the land may be contaminated, whilst new areas of landscaping including planters are proposed. The use of suggested conditions (the importation of soil and unexpected contamination) will mitigate this potential issue.

### **PLANNING BALANCE**

The design of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, Impact upon the host Grade II Listed Building (neutral impact). The proposed development would comply with the relevant policies of the development plan.

The impact upon residential amenity and the highway impact is considered to be acceptable.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions;

- 1. Standard time**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Details of material to be submitted and approved**
- 4. Details of all new external doors and windows to be submitted and approved**
- 5. Contaminated Land**
- 6. Unexpected Contaminated Land**
- 7. Landscaping details (including planters, furniture and hard landscaping) to be submitted and approved**
- 8. Landscaping implementation**

**In order to give proper effect to the Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation**

**with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.**



