

Application No: 15/0335M

Location: TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, MACCLESFIELD SK10 1EA

Proposal: Alterations, refurbishment, repair work and extension to Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station parts of the Town Hall.

Applicant: Mr Tom Fletcher, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 24-Mar-2015

REASON FOR REPORT:

The Council is the applicant and land and whilst this proposal is a minor development, which accords with planning policy and to which no objection has been made (at the time of report preparation), it is considered necessary to refer this application to the Northern Planning Committee at the discretion of the Head of Strategic and Economic Planning.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal would satisfy the economic and social sustainability roles by providing changes to a building which would preserve the special architectural interest of the building.

The benefits of securing an economic use for the floorspace within the Town Halls Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station and the contribution it should make to ensuring the long-term conservation of the building as a whole; would preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character of the conservation area. The proposals would comply with national policy, and with Policies BE1, BE3, BE15, and BE18 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which respectively support alterations to listed buildings that would preserve their character, and represents appropriate development in conservation areas.

Any harm by virtue of the installation of an access ramp to the front of the building would be limited by the public benefit of the proposals in terms of the improved accessibility and very substantial benefit of bringing the listed building back into a fuller use for the senior citizens groups and community.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon highway safety and amenity.

The scheme represents a sustainable form of development and the planning balance weighs in favour of supporting the development subject to conditions.

As the building is Grade 2* listed, the application for Listed Building Consent is to be determined by the Secretary of State.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

PROPOSAL:

This application seeks planning permission for alterations, refurbishment, repair work and extension to the Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station parts of the Town Hall.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

As a Grade II* listed building, Macclesfield Town Hall has a high level of statutory significance as a building of more than special interest.

The former Police Station and Butter market site is located in the town centre to the rear of and conjoined with the Town Hall. The site is in use as part of the Town Hall. The site is bounded to the north, east and west by adjacent buildings, with its main façade facing south. Pedestrian front access is via Churchside to the south and from the north east corner to the rear. All of the site is contained within the town centre conservation area. The former Police Station and Butter market buildings are Grade II* listed. The existing buildings form a small enclosed external courtyard at the rear of the site. The main frontage faces St. Michaels and All Angels Church.

The accommodation has been used in recent years for storage purposes associated with the Town Hall. The wing to the rear of the Former Police Station is in a poor state of repair and has not been actively used for many years.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

11/2389M - Alterations, refurbishment and repair works including the following: alterations to the fabric to allow for an 8 person passenger lift to meet DDA legislation; removal of modern interventions and reinstatement of historic floor levels and ceiling levels; improvements to lighting and power; alterations to improve emergency egress including new fire routes; refurbishments and redecorations to historic interiors including changes to flooring materials; external repairs and reordering to windows, doors, roof fabric and stonework – Approved 05-Oct-2011

11/4016M - Platform Lift (Listed Building Consent) – Approved 16-Jan-2012

There have been a number of additional listed building consent/ planning applications submitted for alterations, which include an emergency escape, telecommunications antenna and new office buildings.

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy:

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

Of particular relevance are paragraphs 14, 17, 126, 128, 129, 131, 132 and 141.

Development Plan:

The Development Plan for this area is the 2004 Macclesfield Local Plan, which allocates the whole site under policy MTC12 (a Mixed Use Area).

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

- BE1 (Design Guidance)
- BE2 (Preservation of Historic Fabric)
- BE3 (Conservation Areas)
- BE4 (Design Criteria in Conservation Areas)
- BE15 (Listed Buildings)
- BE17 (Preservation of Listed Buildings)
- BE18 (Design Criteria for Listed Buildings)
- DC1 (Design)
- DC2 (Extensions and alterations)
- DC3 (Amenity)
- DC6 (Circulation and Access)

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

As the examination of this plan has now been suspended, its policies carry limited weight. The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

- MP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- SE1: Design;
- SE7: The Historic Environment.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Guidance.

CONSULTATIONS:

The Strategic Highways Engineer raises no objections.

Historic England comment that they support the proposals in principle as providing a sustainable and appropriate use for this partly vacant and under-utilised listed building. While there may be harm to the historic and architectural character of the building Historic England believes these are outweighed by the public benefits.

The Environmental Health Officer raises no objections.

REPRESENTATIONS:

An objection has been received from Activity In Retirement on the grounds that the current users of the Senior Citizens Hall have not been notified of the planning application, the planning application does not state any dedicated car parking provision for the new facility, the Working Party has not approved the plans submitted. Disabled car parking has not been considered as at least 10 parking spaces will be required.

APPLICANTS SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement
Archaeological and Heritage Statement
Land Contamination/Geotechnical Desk Study
Sustainability Statement
Structure Survey
Site Waste and Management Plan
Ventilation and Extraction Statement
Justification for Alterations to a Listed Building
Drainage Design Statement
Structural Method Statement

APPRAISAL:

The Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station were selected as a replacement facility for the Senior Citizens Hall (on Duke Street car park) following a two stage Feasibility Study undertaken in 2012 and 2013.

This application is solely for the proposed alterations, refurbishment, repairs and extensions to the Butter Market and Former Police Station parts of the Town Hall and does not relate to any change of use. The new communities and arts facilities would be for use by the occupants of the existing senior citizens hall in Macclesfield and the general public. The various factors relating to the replacement facility such as car parking, management and detailed internal use are all to be developed following an ongoing consultation process with the community and end users of the building, which is being undertaken separately by the Council and the Hamilton Project.

The new facilities will include: -

- A central, ground floor café / social space accessed directly off the main entrance and connected to an external courtyard for use by the users and the public.
- Large multi-use hall space with dedicated storage, adjacent to the café. Its uses may include ballroom dancing, yoga, tai-chi, lectures, readings, fitness classes. It can also be served by the adjacent café / kitchens to serve as potential function space e. g. weddings.
- A variety of large and small group rooms at all levels with suitable IT facilities and storage for meetings, community groups and classes.

- A large Arts and Crafts space on the first floor with adjacent storage and wc facilities.
- Easily accessible stairs and lifts, WC's and ancillary spaces to support the main spaces.
- Small kitchens, servery and office to serve the central café.
- External courtyard.

It is the works to the frontage of the building to facilitate access and the proposed conservatory and new extension to the rear, which are considered the elements that require consideration under this planning application. The total floor area of new accommodation measures 67m². For further details of the internal works associated with bringing this part of the Town Hall into active use, please refer to application 15/0334M elsewhere on this agenda.

The key issues are:

- a) The impact of the development on the character and appearance of Churchside and the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- b) The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring buildings.
- c) The impact of the proposal on the Grade II* Listed Town Hall.
- d) The impact of the proposal on archaeological assets.

Environmental Sustainability

Local Plan policies BE1 and DC1 address matters of design and appearance. Policy BE1 states that the Council will promote high standards of design and new development should reflect local character, use appropriate materials and respect form, layout, siting, scale and design of surrounding buildings and their setting. Policy DC1 states that the overall scale, density, height, mass and materials of new development must normally be sympathetic to the character of the local environment, street scene, adjoining buildings and the site itself. The National Planning Policy Framework also notes that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development”.

As a Grade II* listed building, Macclesfield Town Hall has a high level of statutory significance as a building of more than special interest.

It is duly acknowledged that Macclesfield Town Hall is an important building within the Conservation Area – it occupies a commanding position on the eastern side of the historic market place in the centre of Macclesfield adjacent to the medieval church. The grounds of St. Michaels and All Angels Church lie immediately to the south opposite the Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station, while businesses and shops both flank and lie opposite to form an attractive pedestrianised square. The lanes and streets that radiate the market place preserve the medieval layout of the town, but are now lined with mainly 18th and 19th century buildings. Glimpses of the Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station are provided from these routes, especially from Market Place and Church Street, with the most impressive view of the building gained from the church yard to the front of St. Michaels and All Angels Church.

Due to the historic nature of the listed building the existing main entrance cannot provide level access from the street. For this reason a new, DDA compliant external ramped access is proposed to the existing south façade. It is considered that the design solution offered which is a steel ramp and steps would have an acceptable impact on the front of the building.

Other alterations to the front of the building (south elevation) include: -

- the refurbishment of timber sash windows (or replacement) to match the existing;
- refurbishment or new glazed fanlight to match existing;
- insertion of glass louvres;
- new double glazed structural glass doors;
- new timber door, painted green with stone lintel to match existing;
- existing rainwater goods re-used following roof refurbishment, or new to match existing; and,
- existing welsh slate roof lifted and re-laid on felt and insulation to match existing.

To the rear of the Former Borough Police Station, it is proposed to remove a limited section of the building which is a more modern addition. This wing is thought to date back to the early to mid 20th century and is of limited historical and aesthetic significance. Consideration can be given to the retention of wall stubs to allow the original layout and plan form to be appreciated. The demolition of the northernmost wall will result in a significant loss of historic fabric, however, an appraisal of the building has confirmed that this northernmost bay is a later extension and is of limited historical or aesthetic significance, the walls proposed for demolition are much altered with an apparently inserted window and a blocked door, the demolition and construction of a new extension in keeping with the historic fabric will enhance this part of the building with very little impact on the building as a whole.

To the north, in part of the space between the rear of the Butter Market and the Former Borough Police Station, it is proposed to create a café area which would occupy a new glazed 'conservatory' space which will connect to a new landscaped external courtyard area. The conservatory area is enclosed to three sides by other Council owned buildings, so this would have no impact on the amenity of any neighbouring properties. The use of glazing will retain the open courtyard appearance and feel as such will only have a limited impact.

As mentioned above, the proposed development is located within the boundary of the Macclesfield (Town Centre Conservation Area) and the Town Hall is identified as a focal building. The proposed development will have no adverse impact upon the principal elevation of the building, which will remain a focal point, there will, therefore be of limited impact on the Conservation Area. In fact it is considered that the above alterations have been well thought through and should improve the character and appearance of the building and are acceptable in design terms, whilst preserving the special character of the Conservation Area. The refurbishment works to the exterior doors and windows, and roof as well as the proposed alterations to facilitate access and extensions / alterations to the rear should allow the Butter Market and Former Borough Police Station elements of the Town Hall to function far better as a community hub as envisaged.

Undoubtedly, the ramp element of the scheme would result in some harm to the building and there is a balance to be made between a very positive compliance with local plan policy in terms of conservation of a listed building and any harmful aspect of providing DDA compliance. In this instance, the very substantial benefit of bringing the listed building into fuller use, thereby helping to sustain its future, more than outweighs any harm that would be caused by DDA compliance.

Given the external alterations to the frontage and proposed extensions to the rear are limited, the special architectural interest will be preserved. The benefits of securing an economic use for the floorspace and the contribution it should make to ensuring the long-term conservation of the building as a whole; and preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character of the conservation area are welcomed. The Conservation Officer considers that the proposals will be of benefit to the building and supports the proposals. The proposals would comply with national policy, and with Policies BE1, BE3, BE15, and BE18 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which respectively support alterations to listed buildings that would preserve their character, and appropriate development in conservation areas.

There are details which may require refinement and further details to be submitted which relate to the refurbishment works to windows, doors and stonework. It is considered appropriate to provide details of these via condition.

The Environmental Protection Officers only concern relates to the main function room and its future possible use to be hired out for weddings and private / corporate functions etc. Noise escape of amplified sound from live music / discos and amplified voices is of concern as an essential measure to avoid potential noise nuisance / sleep disturbance and loss of residential amenity to occupiers of nearby residencies. Given the works proposed do not involve a change of use, it is not considered necessary for any condition which would require sound proofing / insulation to be added to the rooms. However, it should be noted that the works proposed have been designed to maximise the energy efficiency of the building and the architect has given considerable thought to minimising any potential for any noise nuisance.

The main hall has limited external walls / windows for natural ventilation and therefore, there is high potential for it to become hot and 'airless' particularly during functions held during warm weather conditions and involving high numbers of persons - involved in dancing activities etc. The Environmental Health Officer recommends that the overall ventilation of the main hall should incorporate an effective air conditioning system to maintain a comfortable internal temperature, in addition to the ventilation aspect of providing fresh air. This would in turn afford a comfortable internal environment and reduce any temptation for patrons to open external doors and any windows for cooling and ventilation purposes.

In order to control any odours from the kitchen area, it is considered reasonable to attach a condition which would require a scheme of odour control to be submitted which would detail the filtration and extraction system to control the discharge of odours and fumes arising from food handling; preparation and cooking.

The Town Hall lies at the heart of the town centre, and has good access to public transport modes. As stated previously, the application seeks consent for very limited works to the frontage of the building and extensions to the rear.

A Sustainability Statement has been submitted to accompany the application, which sets out the approach for mechanical, electrical and passive environmental systems in order to minimise the energy demand of the building without unacceptably altering the character or appearance of its historic features.

The Development Control Archaeologist from Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service comments that the application is supported by an archaeological and heritage statement. This considers information held in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record, readily-available secondary sources, and the historic maps of the area. It is noted that the site lies within the historic core of Macclesfield, in an area where archaeological deposits might be expected. It is argued, however, that the development will involve very limited ground disturbance and that the area has already been significantly disturbed by the construction of the Butter Market and police station. It may also be noted that a recent watching brief, which was maintained during the restoration of the properties immediately to the east, did not reveal any archaeological deposits. In these circumstances, it is advised that further archaeological work is unlikely to be worthwhile and no further mitigation is advised.

Highways

The Strategic Highways Engineer has raised no objections to the application as the proposed changes to the building do not result in any material highway impact considerations. The building is considered to fall within a highly sustainable location and that the works are limited to largely internal refurbishment works and small scale extensions (not involving a change of use) that the additional floor area will be small enough in nature not to warrant any additional parking requirements. The comments raised by Activity In Retirement with regards to parking are noted, and it is considered that there is capacity to the rear of the town hall to provide access for disabled users and provide access for events. This matter is being considered separately by a working party, however, from a planning perspective it is not considered reasonable to condition any use of the car park for the facility as the application does not require a change of use of the building, it effectively is simply bringing an existing building which has lied largely dormant over recent years back into use.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, this is a 'significant' heritage asset which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area. The NPPF strongly supports the conservation of such "heritage assets". The proposed works will facilitate the further community use of the building which would provide an example of the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to the establishment of sustainable communities.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will help to provide a replacement for the existing Senior Citizens Hall and community hall as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to Macclesfield Town Centre including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the

construction industry supply chain. In addition, the development would ensure a long terms future for the heritage asset.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

It is considered that the proposed alterations and extensions to the building would preserve the special architectural interest of the building and any harm in respect of installation of the ramp to the front of the building would clearly be outweighed by the public benefit of the proposals in terms of accessibility and facilitation of the extended use of the building.

The sympathetic nature of the development proposed will conserve and enhance a heritage asset which is currently under utilised and under threat of neglect.

The proposed development is largely internal works, the proposed demolition and extension is in a concealed yard surrounded by buildings, so the proposed development will have minimal impact upon the Conservation Area.

The proposals have minimal impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and highway safety.

The comments from Activity In Retirement are noted and comments on car parking are addressed in the report above. Consultees have been notified in the usual way and a working party has been set up to ensure that there is full engagement with existing user groups of the Senior Citizens Hall.

The proposals comply with the relevant development plan policies and the NPPF and therefore is recommended for approval subject to conditions. It will be necessary to refer the related application for Listed Building Consent on to the Secretary of State to determine the application.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Planning and Enforcement Manager, in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of the Northern Planning Board, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A04EX - Materials to match existing
3. A09EX - Rainwater goods

4. A21EX - Roof lights set flush
5. A scheme of odour control should be submitted with the application detailing the filtration and extraction system to control the discharge of odours and fumes arising from food handling; preparation and cooking.

(c) Crown copyright and database rights 2015. Ordnance Survey
100049045, 100049046.

