

WINDSOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

19 July 2017

Item: 4

Application No.:	17/01189/LBC
Location:	Guildhall High Street Windsor SL4 1LR
Proposal:	Installation of working-at-height safety features including replacement walkways, collapsible handrails and fall arrest system. Renovation and decoration works to the ground floor western elevation including surface rendering and primary/ancillary entrances and associated stonework detailing. Refurbishment of lead waterproofing to cornice and renovation of existing first floor sash windows.
Applicant:	Mr Searle
Agent:	Ms Deniz Beck
Parish/Ward:	Windsor Unparished/Castle Without Ward

If you have a question about this report, please contact: Olivia Mayell on or at olivia.mayell@rbwm.gov.uk

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Windsor Guildhall is a Grade I Listed Building. The proposal is to add safety features onto the roof to allow for safer access, decorative works to the west elevation and refurbishment to lead water proofing and renovations works to ten of the first floor windows. Insufficient information has been provided to determine whether the proposed alterations would affect the significance of the Listed Building or preserve its special architectural and historic interest in compliance with the requirements of both National and Local Plan Policy and the statutory requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It is recommended the Panel refuses planning permission for the following summarised reasons (the full reasons are identified in Section 10 of this report):

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| 1. | Insufficient supporting information has been provided by the applicant, as required by paragraph 128 of the NPPF, in order to allow the application to be determined. |
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2. REASON FOR PANEL DETERMINATION

- The Council's Constitution does not give the Head of Planning delegated powers to determine the application in the way recommended; such decisions can only be made by the Panel.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The Grade I Listed Windsor Guildhall is located within the Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area. It was designed by Sir Thomas Fitz and begun in 1687. There are suggestions that due to Fitz dying in 1688, before its completion, that it was finished by Sir Christopher Wren. When first built Guildhall consisted of a first floor meeting chamber supported by Portland stone Doric columns which enclosed a corn exchange at ground level. In 1829 an extension to Guildhall was commissioned by the then mayor James Bedborough following the demolition of a butchers shambles and housing at the back of Guildhall. The two storey brick and stone extension complimented the existing corn exchange and also included an open market space beneath. The original extension consisted of external arches and internal pillars much like the corn exchange. The extension became enclosed in 1905 and the enclosed archways became glazed windows.
- 3.2 The first floor has nineteen sash windows thirteen 6 over 6 located on the north south and east elevations and six 9 over 6 on the west elevation. The western ground floor elevation has three doors; the left and right are much smaller in height and width to the middle door which serves as an entrance to the museum. All are currently painted red with a gloss finish and gold detailing. Set further forward than the surrounding building line Guildhall has a prominent presence on

Windsor's High Street. It is located less than 100 metres from Windsor Castle, the only other Grade I listed building in the highly sensitive Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ANY RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Below is a list of the most relevant planning history:

Ref.	Description	Decision and Date
95/01797/LBC	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS	App 1996 by Secretary of State
12/01799/LBC	Replacement of two rear first floor windows	PERM 17.08.2012

- 4.1 The proposal is for several different works in varying locations in the building, the first is to upgrade the current safety features on the roof of Guildhall. The current walkways are slatted timber and are considered by the applicant to become dangerous when wet so it is proposed to change these walkways to PVCu planks mechanically fixed to a chamfered "T" section. It is also proposed to add a stepped walkway on the western side of the roof to allow safe passage from the main access hatch to the perimeter walkway, a collapsible safety handrail on the northern side of the roof and a 'Mansafe' fall prevention system which will be fixed to the structure through the roof covering.
- 4.2 The second part of the proposal is work to the ground floor western elevation. The existing elevation is now unpainted after work to remove the stucco and paint was completed several years ago. The work proposed is to remove the remaining paint left on the elevation and repair the stonework detailing around the three doorways. It is then proposed that the elevation be re-rendered and the elevation, doors, decorative lintels and corbels repainted.
- 4.3 The third part of the proposal is for the repair and/or removal and replacement of a number of sash windows on the first floor and repair work to the lead waterproofing.

5. MAIN RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Listed Buildings

With respect to Act, the applicable statutory provisions are:

- 1 Section 16(2) which regards listed building consent for any works; and
- 2 Section 66(1) the determination of applications

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework Sections

Paragraph 128 requiring applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets.

Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets.

Paragraph 132 relating to the impact of significance on any heritage assets.

Paragraph 134 relating to the weight given to public benefits of a proposal against the harm on the heritage asset.

5.3 Royal Borough Local Plan

The main strategic planning considerations applying to the site and the associated policies are:

Listed Building
LB2

These policies can be found at

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/154/local_plan_documents_and_appendices

Borough Local Plan Submission Version – Policy HE1

5.4 Other Local Strategies or Publications

Other Strategies or publications relevant to the proposal are:

- Windsor Town Centre Article 4 Direction Paint Colours
- Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal - RBWM

More information on these documents can be found at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200414/local_development_framework/494/supplementary_planning

5.5 Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

Historic England has produced new guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF and PPG with regard to the historic environment in the form of:

- 1 Historic England *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (Historic England, 2016);
- 2 Historic Environment *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking* (Historic England, 2015a);
- 3 Historic Environment *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Historic England, 2015b); and
1. Historic England *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 4: Tall Buildings* (Historic England, 2015c).

6. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The key issue for consideration is:

- i Insufficient information has been provided in order to determine the application.

Insufficient information

- 6.2 The submitted Heritage Statement is considered to provide insufficient details of the architectural elements of the Grade I Listed Building affected, the significance of those elements and the justification for these works. The Heritage Statement states that fixing elements to the roof “*has the potential to harm the fabric of the roof and care should be taken to minimise this*”, but does not elaborate on this. The potential mentioned has not been investigated and any mitigation strategies to limit this potential have not been provided. There has also been no assessment on the significance of the roof and therefore its impact on the fabric has not been assessed only the impact on the aesthetic value, despite stating that “*the building retains considerable evidential value and significance.*” Complete plans and details showing exactly where the fixings for the PVCu planks, the fall arrest safety apparatus or collapsible handrail would be on the roof have not been submitted. The drawing no. 2146-3-02-A only shows through a series of coloured dotted lines the paths that the systems would take. Without these drawings it is not possible to assess the impact that these proposed roof top features would have on the fabric of the heritage asset.
- 6.3 The proposal included further work to remove the remaining stucco and paint from the western elevation although no method statement was supplied as to how this would be removed with damaging the stone, despite a request for further information. No evidence yet provided as to if the elevation was painted originally, why it should be painted now and what impact it will make.

- 6.4 It is still unclear as to the exact work being carried out on the windows and even how many windows are included in this proposal. The Design and Access Statement has a total of twelve windows (two in the Ascot Room and ten in the Council Chamber) however the submitted drawing no. 2146-3-02-A details only 10 windows as does the Heritage Statement. There has been no assessment provided as to the condition of these windows and therefore what work is being proposed. The complete removal and replacement of any windows on this building would need thorough justification as to the need, the loss of historic fabric would cause irreversible harm that can not be taken lightly or without evidence that the windows are indeed beyond repair. After visiting the site it was not evident that this is the case and the removal of any of the windows would result in significant loss of historic fabric and damage to the building which would be unavoidable. The fenestration is generally considered an important part of the special architectural and historic interest of any Listed Building and in this case the sash windows are specifically mentioned in the Listed Building description. The repair of historic windows is generally considered the acceptable conservation approach unless the windows are beyond all practical repair; no supporting justification is provided for work or the approach recommended.
- 6.5 There is no mention in any documents (Design and Access, Heritage Statement or submitted drawings) that four of the windows marked for repair/replacement are blocked from the inside with oak panelling. It is therefore unknown as to how these windows would be repaired/replaced as any removal of the interior panelling would need a separate Listed Building Consent to be granted before work could begin. A method statement should have been provided with the application documents to explain this part of the proposal.
- 6.6 Due to the insufficient information submitted by the applicant it is not possible to assess the level of impact that the proposals will have upon the significance of this Grade I Listed heritage asset. The applicant was provided with the opportunity to withdraw the application or make further submissions, this has not been forthcoming.

7. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

The case officer posted a statutory notice advertising the application at the site on 27th May 2017. No letters of support or objection have been received.

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
Historic England	No Comment	6.2-6.4

8. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A - Site location plan and site layout
- Appendix B – plans and elevation drawings
- Appendix C – Documents detailing safety features
- Appendix D – Heritage Statement
- Appendix E – Design and Access Statement

9. REASONS RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL IF PERMISSION IS NOT GRANTED

Insufficient supporting information for works to the Grade I Listed Building has been provided by the applicant to allow the application to be determined and the justification for those works as required by the NPPF paragraph 128 and 132. The council is therefore unable to assess compliance with policy LB2 of the Royal Borough Local Plan.