

MAIDENHEAD DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

20 December 2023

Item: 3.

Application No.:	23/00464/LBC
Location:	Maidenhead Public Library St Ives Road Maidenhead SL6 1QU
Proposal:	Consent for the installation of a new heating ventilation and air conditioning system (part retrospective).
Applicant:	Royal Borough Windsor And Maidenhead
Agent:	Mrs Kiran Hunjan
Parish/Ward:	Maidenhead Unparished/St Marys

If you have a question about this report, please contact: David Johnson on 01628 685692 or at david.johnson@rbwm.gov.uk

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Listed building consent is sought for the installation of a new heating ventilation and air conditioning system, to replace the existing system within the building which is at its end of life. The works internally within the library building have to a large extent been carried out and the works are therefore part retrospective.
- 1.2 The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset and its immediate setting. The harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset is outweighed by the public benefit identified, namely the continued use of a popular and well used public facility.

It is recommended the Committee grants listed building consent with the conditions listed in Section 13 of this report.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION

- The application has been submitted by the Local Authority and is classified as a 'Regulation 3' application. As the decision-maker is the applicant, in line with the Council's Constitution, the application is to be determined by the Maidenhead Development Management Committee.

3. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The public library dates from the early 1970s and was designed by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek Architects. It is built of a reinforced concrete frame with suspended floor slabs on piled foundations. The exterior of the building is clad in a red engineering brick, also used for the garden walls and paving, defining its strong brick character and appearance which relates to the materiality of historic Maidenhead. The windows are set within painted steel frames.
- 3.2 The building is built on a slope resulting in a slightly raised ground floor and the need for steps and a ramp into the building. The main entrance is along the north elevation of the building under an open canopy, comprising of a terrace above.
- 3.3 The significance of the building is strongly defined by its architectural interest and a good example of the architect's work, as duly described within the list entry description:

“The building is striking and novel in its use of a space frame to create a clear, column-free interior and to give clerestory lighting all-round the building, while the hard red brick gives a semblance of weight to the lower structure, although it is not in fact load-bearing. ‘The idea of a roof implies for me a balance of solid and void’, Koralek told Powell, and its deep overhang was designed to be sheltering, inviting and un-institutional. The meticulous use of brickwork, extending a plinth from the outside through the interior, is a distinctive feature of ABK’s work at this time. It is also a response to the red brick of the Victorian town. ABK first came to prominence when in 1961, the year of their foundation Paul Koralek won a competition for the Berkeley Library, Trinity College, Dublin. This much smaller building is a similar mix of flexible space around fixed staircases and balconies, and similarly makes use of top-lighting to create a dramatic and well-lit interior. Additionally, however, it shows a progression in ABK’s use of materials and a greater variety of forms in their 1970s’ buildings than they had displayed in the 1960s.”

- 3.4 The building forms part of a civic character area within Maidenhead Town Centre, with the Town Hall located on the opposite side of St Ives Road. It is a strong positive contributor to the character and appearance of the street scene.

4. KEY CONSTRAINTS

- 4.1 Maidenhead Public Library and the attached Maudsley Memorial Garden combine to form the Grade II Listing. The site is located just outside the Maidenhead Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 4.2 The site also lies partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

5. THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Listed building consent is sought for the installation of a new heating ventilation and air conditioning system. The works internally within the library building have to a large extent been carried out and the works are therefore part retrospective.
- 5.2 During the course of the application, additional information and amended drawings have been received which sought to address comments raised by both the RBWM Conservation Officer and the 20th Century Society. The amendments relate to the following:
- Amended drawings showing a revised location for the siting of the air conditioning units, screening and location of trunking from the internal works to the air conditioning units containing pipes and wiring; and,
 - Confirmation that the colour of the internal pipework trays will match the colour of the existing ceiling colour.
- 5.3 Whilst internal works relation to the application have been carried out, the condenser units have not been sited in the proposed location and are not therefore currently operational.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
17/01159/LBC	Consent to install three acoustic meeting pods.	Permitted 12.05.2017

16/00360/LBC	Consent for upgrade of electrical supply system to interior and addition of window opening actuation system.	Permitted 14.04.2016
11/02408/LBC	Installation of feral bird proofing measures.	Permitted 22.11.2011
11/00041/LBC	Consent for 5 'fin' cycle stands.	Permitted 17.03.2011
07/02961/LBC	Consent to undertake improvements and upgrading of access routes to building including surfaces, ramp gradient, handrails and stepped access.	Permitted by S of S 24.01.2008
07/02960/FULL	Improvements and upgrading of access routes to building including surfaces, ramp gradient, handrails and stepped access.	Permitted 20.12.2007
07/00072/LBC	General improvements and refurbishments/repairs.	Permitted by Secretary of State 25.06.2007
06/01384/LBC	Consent to replace inner and outer doors to main and St Ives Road entrances and replacement of window film with solar security film.	Permitted by S of S 27.10.2006
04/41498/LBC	Internal refurbishment and remodelling, external refurbishment, external plant enclosure and associated ancillary and external works.	Withdrawn 26.06.2006
04/41497/FULL	Internal refurbishment and remodelling, external refurbishment, external plant enclosure and associated ancillary and external works.	Permitted 20.05.2004
03/39893/FULL	Extension and alterations to library including associated external works landscaping and paving.	Withdrawn 02.02.2004
01/36787/FULL	Change of use of part of Library to Internet Cafe (to provide Internet and Computer access, sell hot and cold beverages, sandwiches, jacket potatoes, newspapers, stationery etc including use of patio area adjoining).	Refused 12.09.2001
23/00463/FULL	Installation of a new heating ventilation and air conditioning system (part retrospective).	Pending consideration (also on the committee agenda)

7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7.1 The main relevant policies are:

Borough Local Plan (BLP)

Issue	Policy
Historic Environment	HE1

8. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework Sections (NPPF)

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Borough Wide Design Guide

9. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

The application relates to an application for listed building consent. As such, occupiers of adjacent properties were not notified directly of the application.

The planning officer posted a site notice advertising the application at the site and the application was advertised in the Local Press.

No comments were received in connection with the application.

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
Historic England	No objections raised on the original consultation. No additional comments received following re-consultation on additional information.	Noted.
Protection of Ancient Buildings	No comments received.	N/A
Ancient Monuments Society	No comments received.	N/A
Council of British Archaeology	No comments received.	N/A
Victorian Society	No comments received.	N/A
Georgian Group	No comments received.	N/A
Twentieth Century Society.	Objections raised to the initial proposed siting of the Air Conditioning units. Objection withdrawn based on amended plans.	Section 10

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Consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
RBWM Conservation	Initial objections to the proposal. Objection withdrawn based on amended plans.	Section 10

10. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

10.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i Whether the proposals would preserve the special architectural and/or historic interest of the listed building and where harm is identified, whether there is sufficient clear and convincing justification and public benefit to outweigh the harm.

Impact on the heritage asset

10.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 states that 'In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the Local Planning Authority or 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.'

10.3 It is one of the core principles of the NPPF that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Section 16 of the NPPF addresses proposals affecting heritage assets. Paragraph 199 sets out that 'great weight should be given to the assets' conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. The NPPF sets out that the Local Planning Authority should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

10.4 Policy HE1 of the BLP is relevant and states that the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to its significance and that development proposals are required to demonstrate how they preserve or enhance character, appearance and function of heritage assets, (whether designated or non-designated), and their settings and respect the significance of the historic environment. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and works, which would cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting, will not be permitted without clear justification in accordance with legislation and national policy.

10.5 As originally submitted, concerns were raised regarding the prominent location of the proposed external air conditioning units on the first floor terraces of the building and the resultant harmful impact of the visual clutter from these units and associated ductwork on the appearance of the simple built form of the building. An objection was also raised from the Twentieth Century Society in relation to the prominent siting of the units and the overall size, design and material specification which would compound the harm.

- 10.6 In order to address these concerns, amended plans were submitted during the course of the application. The proposed condenser units would be sited to the rear/side of the building, enclosed within a 1.85m high enclosure. Whilst visible from the river, the location of the air conditioning units is acceptable in principle in relation to the listed building and reaches an appropriate compromise between the protection of the heritage asset and the continued use of the building as a public facility for residents of all ages. However, conditions are recommended to secure further detail of the materiality and colour of the enclosure and the external pipework and cable trunking to the library building. Whilst the submitted drawings indicate that the trunking would match the window frames, details of a specific colour would be required.
- 10.7 The proposed siting of the duct work and heating and cooling equipment internally would be visible due to the open structure of the building, which would result in some harm to its character and appearance. However, it has been designed to reduce the impact of the development and when considering the utilitarian nature of the building, particularly at roof level the approach is acceptable in principle. The colour finish to the internal duct work would need to be confirmed, and this information would be secured by recommended condition. The colour should be sympathetic and in keeping with the interior of the listed building.
- 10.8 Given the above, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and its setting. In line with paragraph 202 of the NPPF, it is necessary to weigh this against any public benefit of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable.
- 10.9 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed works would result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, in this case, the works are required in order to secure the long-term preservation and use of Maidenhead Public Library as a public facility. The harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset is therefore outweighed by identified public benefits. The existing system has come to the end of its life span and the library is not currently able to adjust the environment within the building to take account of the external environment in terms of changing temperatures. In order for the library to fulfil its function as a public facility used by residents of all ages, the building needs to provide an environment that is comfortable for users all year round. The proposal would allow for the continued use of a popular and well used public facility, and this is a public benefit of significant weight.
- 10.10 As such, in line with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, special regard is given to preserving the heritage asset. The identified less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset is outweighed by the public benefit identified and therefore, listed building consent should be granted. Due regard has been given to the provisions of Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 For the reasons set out in this report the proposals are deemed to comply with relevant development plan policies. It is therefore recommended that listed building consent is granted subject to the conditions listed below.

12. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A – Site location plan

- Appendix B – Plan and elevation drawings

13. CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IF LISTED BUILDING CONSENT IS GRANTED

1 The works/demolition shall commence not later than three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and to avoid unimplemented consents remaining effective after such lapse of time that relevant considerations may have changed.

2 Any damage or disturbance caused to the building in execution of the works shall be made good to match the original materials within six months of the approved works being completed.

Reason: To preserve the special interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Borough Local Plan Policy HE1 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

3 Prior to installation of the relevant works, confirmation of the RAL colour/colour reference of the duct work shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the special interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Borough Local Plan Policy HE and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4 Prior to installation of the external condenser units, further details and confirmation of the RAL colour/colour reference of the external pipework and cable trunking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the special interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Borough Local Plan Policy HE1 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

5 Prior to installation of the external condenser units, further details including a detailed elevation drawing of the proposed enclosures for the external units, including finish to the materials, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the special interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Borough Local Plan Policy HE1 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and plans.

Informatives

1 The applicant should note that this approval extends only to the works detailed as part of this application. In the event that the works cannot be implemented without a degree of alteration, the applicant is advised to contact the Local Planning Authority in order to ascertain whether further Consent might be required.

