

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2016/1672

**LOCATION:** Abington Museum Manor House Abington Park,  
Wellingborough Road

**DESCRIPTION:** Listed Building Consent for Phase 1 internal refurbishment and  
repairs to various areas at Abington Museum

**WARD:** Abington Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, NBC  
**AGENT:** Stimpson Walton Bond Architects

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Council owned land and is the Applicant

**DEPARTURE:** No

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#### **APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

##### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The proposed works would, subject to conditions, preserve this Grade I Listed Building's setting and features of special and historical interest as required by the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

##### **2. THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The applicant seeks Listed Building Consent to carry out a variety of internal alterations to improve and redecorate the interior of the museum in order to increase the elements of the building that can be accessible to the public and to facilitate the holding of public and private functions.

##### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

3.1 The application site consists of Abington Park Museum (which has been open since 1899), which was formerly Abington Abbey. The building was constructed in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century surrounding a quadrangle. The building was altered during the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, before seeing more alterations being carried out to the exterior in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The building is largely two storeys with an attic and key features include corncicing, a parapet, dormers, pediments and arches. The interior contains a number of important features, including framed roof to the Great Hall, tall mullioned windows that serve the Great Hall, panelling and plaster ceilings.

- 3.2 Due to the age and design of the building, its special features and historic use, it is a Grade I Listed Building.
- 3.3 In addition, the application site is in close proximity to the Grade A (akin to Grade I) Listed Church of St Peter and St Paul and the Grade II Listed Abington Park Cottages.
- 3.4 Furthermore, the site is within Abington Park and as a result benefits from a great deal of prominence and is also within the Abington Park Conservation Area.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 N/1991/0107 – Structural, stonework and window repairs; redecoration; new ceiling linings; and damp proofing – Approved  
N/1992/1403 – Minor building works for public display of collections - Approved

#### **5. PLANNING POLICY**

##### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering whether to grant listed building consent to 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.

##### **5.2 National Policies**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system.

- 5.3 Paragraph 17 requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. This is strengthened by paragraph 132. In addition, paragraph 129 requires that the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) is identified and assessed. Paragraph 134 requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

##### **5.4 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

- BN5 – Historic Environment
- S10 – Sustainable Development Principles

##### **5.5 Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policy is material to this application:

E20 – New development

## **6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 **Conservation (NBC)** – Overall, the proposed works are supported, however, concerns are raised in respect of the use of tile inserts on the steps leading from the Great Hall. The use of a temporary screen is also considered appropriate.
- 6.2 **Historic England** – No objections.

## **7. APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The proposed alterations are internal only and as a consequence, the works would not affect the setting of the Listed Building. The primary matter under consideration, therefore, is the impact upon the character and appearance of the Grade I Listed Building.
- 7.2 The works proposed broadly fall into a number of categories. These comprise the installation of lighting to the entrance vestibule, the carrying out of repairs and installation of demarcating to steps within the Great Hall, the subdivision of a room to form a storage area, alterations to the existing toilet facilities and restoration to the Long Hall.
- 7.3 It is considered that the addition of lights to the entrance vestibule would have some benefit as the additional illumination would draw the attention of visitors to the roof structure, which would promote understanding of the construction of the building. Furthermore, the additional lighting would improve the usage of this space. The construction of the lobby area includes a picture rail, which would to some degree, mask the actual lighting installation, and would reduce the impact on the character of this space. The main area of concern relates to the installation of electrical wiring, which if inappropriately placed, could lessen the success of the overall improvement works.
- 7.4 From discussions with the scheme's architect, it is apparent that the wiring could be masked by the aforementioned picture rail, which is an acceptable situation. In order to provide some certainty of this, a condition is recommended that would ensure that the Local Planning Authority approves details of wiring runs prior to the commencement of development.
- 7.5 In respect of the Main Hall (which is accessed from the aforementioned lobby), the majority of proposals relate to general repairs to the overall condition of this key room. As such, this would support the continued use of the building which would be of significant benefit in securing its future uses. Of greater concern is that there is a short series of stone steps leading from the southern elevation. Given the age of the building, these have been subject to some wear, which add to the character of the building.
- 7.6 Given the nature of the building and the fact that public access will be a feature of future uses, it is appreciated that there is some need for colour delineation to be installed on these steps in order to aid visitors with visual impairment. Following discussions with the applicant's agent, it is proposed that a relatively small section of the edge of each step be removed and be replaced by an equal sized section of a flexible material. This would ensure that the step maintains its overall form, whilst providing suitable coloured delineation.
- 7.7 Although it is appreciated that concerns have been raised in respect of this matter from the Council's Conservation Section, it is considered that this element of the proposed works is acceptable. The reason being that any harm arising from the removal of a section of the steps would be less than substantial by reason of the proposal maintaining the shape and form of the steps (which can, of course, be secured by condition) and would be offset to some degree by the fact that the works are required in order to secure the future use of this notable building.

- 7.8 From consultation with Historic England and the Council's own Conservation Section, it is apparent that the most significant proposed alteration is the subdivision of an existing small room. This is due to the potential to result in the removal of key ceiling features. In line with the advice of Historic England, the scheme has now been revised so that the partition is of a freestanding design. This means that there would not be any physical alterations or additions to the existing building therefore obviating the need for Listed Building Consent for this particular element of the proposal.
- 7.9 The proposed alterations and extension to the toilet area would take place within a relatively small section of the building that has already seen a significant number of alterations associated with the installation of the existing facilities. Given this and the fact that such facilities are required in order to ensure that the building is retained with a productive use, it is considered that these elements of the development are acceptable.
- 7.10 The proposed works include a refurbishment of the Long Hall. The proposed works are generally of an unobtrusive nature and consist of repairs to existing wooden window frames and shutters and repairing the existing wooden floor. Such works would be of benefit in returning the building to its original appearance. It is noted that the proposals include the replacement of a fan convector heating from the wall and replacement with cast iron radiators. Whilst such works would result in the installation of heating that has an appearance which is more appropriate to the style of the building, a condition to enable the Local Planning Authority to approve details of the appearance of the new heaters is considered necessary and reasonable.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed works, on balance, would have a neutral impact upon the character and appearance of the building and that any harm to the existing steps would be less than significant and would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. As a result, it is considered that the proposed works are in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policies.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

- 9.1 1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2016/80/100; 2016/80/101a; 2016/80/200; 2016/80/201; 2016/80/202a; 2016/80/203; and 2016/80/400.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the listed building consent application.

3. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the cable runs to serve the new lighting as shown on drawing 2016/80/201 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development and impact on the historic environment in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the replacement radiators as shown on drawing 2016/80/100 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development and impact on the historic environment in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the step inserts as shown on drawing 2016/80/101a shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development and impact on the historic environment in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted schedule of works (revision A).

Reason: In the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development and impact on the historic environment in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. This consent does not confer permission upon the installation of suspended ceilings to the Secondary Entrance Area.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development and impact on the historic environment in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

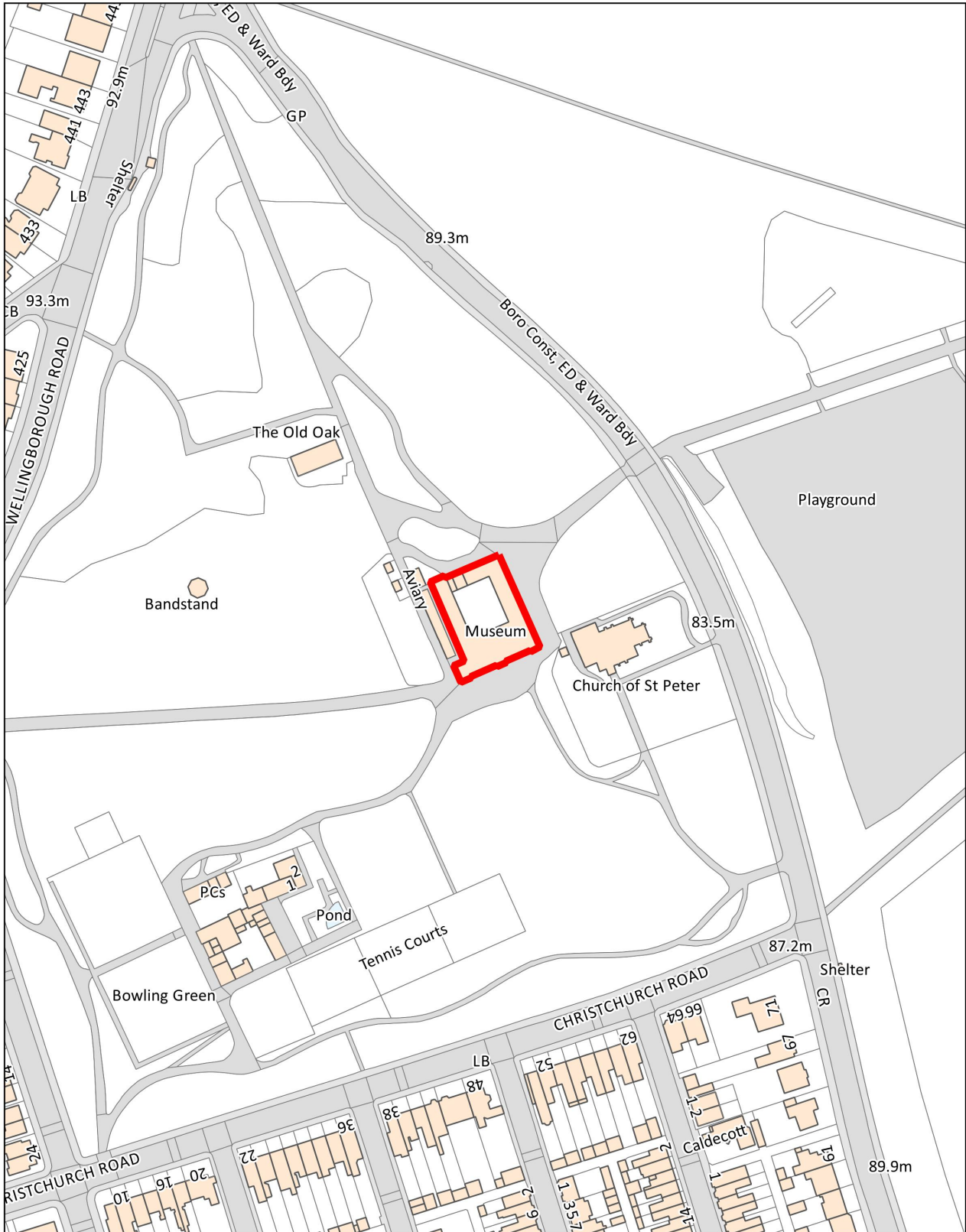
10.1 None


## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



 <p><b>NORTHAMPTON</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p>Title: <b>Abington Museum, Manor House, Abington Park</b></p>	<p>Date: 28-03-2017</p>
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