

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 9th June 2020
DEPARTMENT: Planning Service
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2020/0328

LOCATION: The Guildhall, St Giles Square

DESCRIPTION: Listed Building Consent Application to put up two Benefactors and Philanthropist Boards in the North South corridor, mag lock South entrance doors and add intercom and card reader and put up CCTV camera to cover the South entrance external area

WARD: Castle Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Borough Council
AGENT: N/A

REFERRED BY: Director of Planning and Sustainability
REASON: Council owned land and is the Applicant

DEPARTURE: No

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 not cause significant harm upon the character and appearance of this Listed Building, whilst supporting the ongoing use of this important heritage asset. The level of harm to the character, fabric and historic layout of the building would be less than substantial. The proposal is therefore in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application related to Listed Building Consent for the siting of two Benefactors and Philanthropist Boards in the North South corridor, magnetic locks on the South entrance doors and add intercom and card reader and the installation of a CCTV camera to cover the South entrance external area.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The Guildhall is a Grade II* Listed Building, which was a purpose built town hall in 1861-4 by Edward Godwin in C13 Gothic style. It was later extended in 1889-92 by Matthew Holding, with interiors by Albert Jeffrey. In 1992 it was further extended to the eastern flank.
- 3.2 The Guildhall is constructed of stone with a slate roof and has an irregular shaped footprint. Its internal layout consists of rooms and chambers around a pair of central staircases and accessed of long corridors or galleries.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

Recent relevant planning history:

- 4.1 N/2010/0910 – removal of stud partition walls erected since 1948, re-opening of an existing doorway, rewiring and improvements to lighting. Approved 23/11/2010.
- 4.2 N/2018/0397 – Listed building application for the installation of primary and secondary barriers and control access through existing opening with new sliding doors, door furniture and electronic locks. Approved 08/05/2018
- 4.3 N/2019/0836 - Listed Building Consent Application for the installation of permanent external ladder and landing outside the first floor Farmers Room flat roof and the installation of permanent internal access staircase and landing inside the Guildhall Clock Tower (including mansafe at roof level below parapet level). Approved 04/09/2019

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Statutory Duty

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013).

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

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6 National Policies

- 6.1 **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. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraphs 58 and 69 also advises on safe and accessible environments, where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life community cohesion.

Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 192 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Paragraph 196 which considers the impact of harm in the context of a listed building. Where there is less than substantial harm, the harm should be outweighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

6.2 **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:

Policy BN5 - The Historic Environment and Landscape

Policy S10 - Sustainable Development Principles

6.3 **Northampton Central Area Action Plan 2013**

The Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) provides specific planning policy and guidance for the town centre and adjoining areas where significant regeneration and investment is proposed in the period up to 2026 and is in conformity with the objectives of the NPPF. Relevant policy includes:

Policy 1: Promoting Design Excellence – make efficient use of land by promoting an appropriate mix of land uses in order to increase the vitality and vibrancy of an area and a wider range of choice for users.

6.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6.5 **Other Material Considerations**

All Saints Conservation Area Appraisal

7 **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

7.1 **NBC Conservation Section** – No objection to the Boards, although care needs to be given to the location and potential cumulative impact of further boards on the appreciation of the space and the architectural detailing it benefits from. Options have been offered regarding the location of the CCTV camera. There may be an optimal location from a security point of view but the impact of the proposals on the fabric of the building, including the wiring, should be taken into account when considering the final location to minimise the impact on the significance of the building. The proposals will cause a level of harm, but considered to be less than substantial.

7.2 **Historic England** – No objection to the application on heritage grounds. Consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF in particular in respect of paragraphs 189, 194 and 196.

7.3 **Victorian Society** – No objection in principle but seek guidance from the Council's Conservation Officers. Clarification should be sought regarding the number of Philanthropist and Benefactors boards to be installed.

7.4 **Northamptonshire Police** - Northants Police has no objection to the application and note that it forms the final aspect of a site wide security strategy. Concern about the size and location of the camera installed to look at the old wooden doors and the potential for it to be damaged resulted in

an exploration of alternative models which would be compatible with the rest of the NBC system. It has been agreed that the camera type DS-2CD2545 should be used.

- 7.5 **Town Centre Conservation Area Consultative Committee** - noted that the Guildhall is of significant historical importance as a Grade II* listed building, so it would be particularly important for care to be taken to preserve its heritage and aesthetic value. No objection to the philanthropist boards, although questions were raised about how quickly the space would be filled if a new board is added for each benefactor. The Committee was more concerned about the siting for the intercom and card reader, which appears to be quite prominent. Whilst it was understood that security was important, members felt that it should be possible to find a less prominent site for them, without obscuring or damaging the door and its frame, for example in a darker area to the side of the doors.

8 APPRAISAL

- 8.1 There are two elements of the proposal, the Philanthropist and Benefactor Boards and the security measures.
- 8.2 As part of the Council's action plan to market and promote Northampton's culture, heritage and tourism, it was agreed that the practice of updating the panels that commemorate Benefactors and Philanthropists would be reintroduced. The existing boards are located in the Mayors Names Gallery and currently there is no further space to install more in this location. The North/South corridor has been chosen as the location for the new boards, as it already hosts a selection of boards that include the names of the Mayoresses, Consorts and Town Clerks.
- 8.3 Two new boards have been commissioned to commemorate the Benefactors and Philanthropists in 2020, in a style of calligraphy to match those already on display. There are proposals to add further in the future, but this application only relates to two. They are proposed to be fixed using bracket and screws but following comments from the heritage consultees, it is proposed to add a condition to any consent granted, requiring further details of the method and location of the fixing.
- 8.4 The Benefactors and Philanthropists Boards would have a minor harmful impact on the fabric of the building and cover up stonework patterns, but they recognise the historic tradition of commemorating civic benefactors are also part of the historic significance.
- 8.5 In respect of the security measures, consent is sought for the change and upgrade of security measures, in respect of personal safety of Elected Members and staff who are based within the Guildhall, at a time of increased international threat of terrorism and violence.
- 8.6 The proposal related to the addition of door furniture and electronic locks to allow access the building to be controlled, which would help to protect the personal safety of those working in and visiting the building.
- 8.7 Listed Building Consent was granted in May 2018 for physical barriers and controlled access through existing openings, a new sliding door, door furniture and electronic locks. These works have been substantially completed.
- 8.8 These works did not cover the enhancement of security measures to the South Entrance (of St Giles Square), as a design solution could not be reached that preserved the historic features, fabric and form of the building and provided unobstructed use of the existing fire escape route. This entrance remains open and uncontrolled, giving access to the building, including the large stone stairs linking the entrance lobby to the first floor.
- 8.9 The proposal seeks to add electronic locks and door closures to the existing external timber doors to restrict and better control access to the building. Access would be by card system/door release for staff and members and an intercom for visitors, with a CCTV camera to allow security staff to see who is outside the building.

- 8.10 The card reader measures 75 x 40mm and will be attached to a plate which houses the intercom system. The total plate size measures 204 x 125 x 60mm and will be fitted to the south entrance doors. The door release will be located on the same door frame within the lobby of the south entrance.
- 8.11 Wiring can impact on the appearance and fabric of listed buildings, but in this instance, there is an existing run and hole that can be utilised for this purpose.
- 8.12 In addition, there is a proposal to install a CCTV camera at the top of the stone steps at the entrance of the building from St Giles Square, that would oversee the external covered entrance area. Options have been offered for the location of the camera and further details have been supplied of a more compact CCTV unit, that would be less obtrusive than originally proposed.
- 8.13 The combination of these works is considered to address the security concerns arising from this entrance and address the concerns of Northamptonshire Police, subject to the camera being located at a point which is difficult to be tampered with. They have suggested a more suitable design, which has been agreed with the Facility Manager and a higher more discrete location is welcomed on visual impact grounds.
- 8.14 Historic England have engaged with the Borough Council throughout the process and have raised no objections to the proposal, subject to the further details relating to the fixings.
- 8.15 It is considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm and conforms with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed works are considered to be minimally obtrusive and would not have a significantly demonstrable impact on the historic fabric of the Guildhall. The benefits of the works outweigh any harm to the building and as such are considered to be acceptable.
- 9.2 Historic England and the Victorian Society have responded to the consultation and whilst not objecting have suggested that conditions be imposed regarding the number of boards and method of fixing. During the course of the application, the Facilities Manager has agreed that the application should relate to two boards and a pre-commencement condition added in respect of the fixings.
- 9.3 The design of the CCTV camera has been agreed with Northants Police and the further details relating to the location, addresses the concerns of the national heritage bodies. The Town Centre Conservation Area Consultative Committee have raised concerns about the siting of the entry system equipment, but this location has been chosen as it has a minimal impact on the fabric of the building during installation.
- 9.4 The proposed works would not cause significant harm upon the character and appearance of this Listed Building, whilst supporting the ongoing use of this important heritage asset. The level of harm to the character, fabric and historic layout of the building would be less than substantial. The proposal is therefore in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

10 CONDITIONS

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: Site location Plan dated 24-03-2020, Block Plan dated 24-03-2020, UARN-60197-G(0), Security camera details type DS-2CD2545.

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

3. Prior to works commencing on site, full details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, indicating the exact location and the methods of fixing the CCTV camera, including wiring runs and philanthropist boards to the building. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the protection of the integrity of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

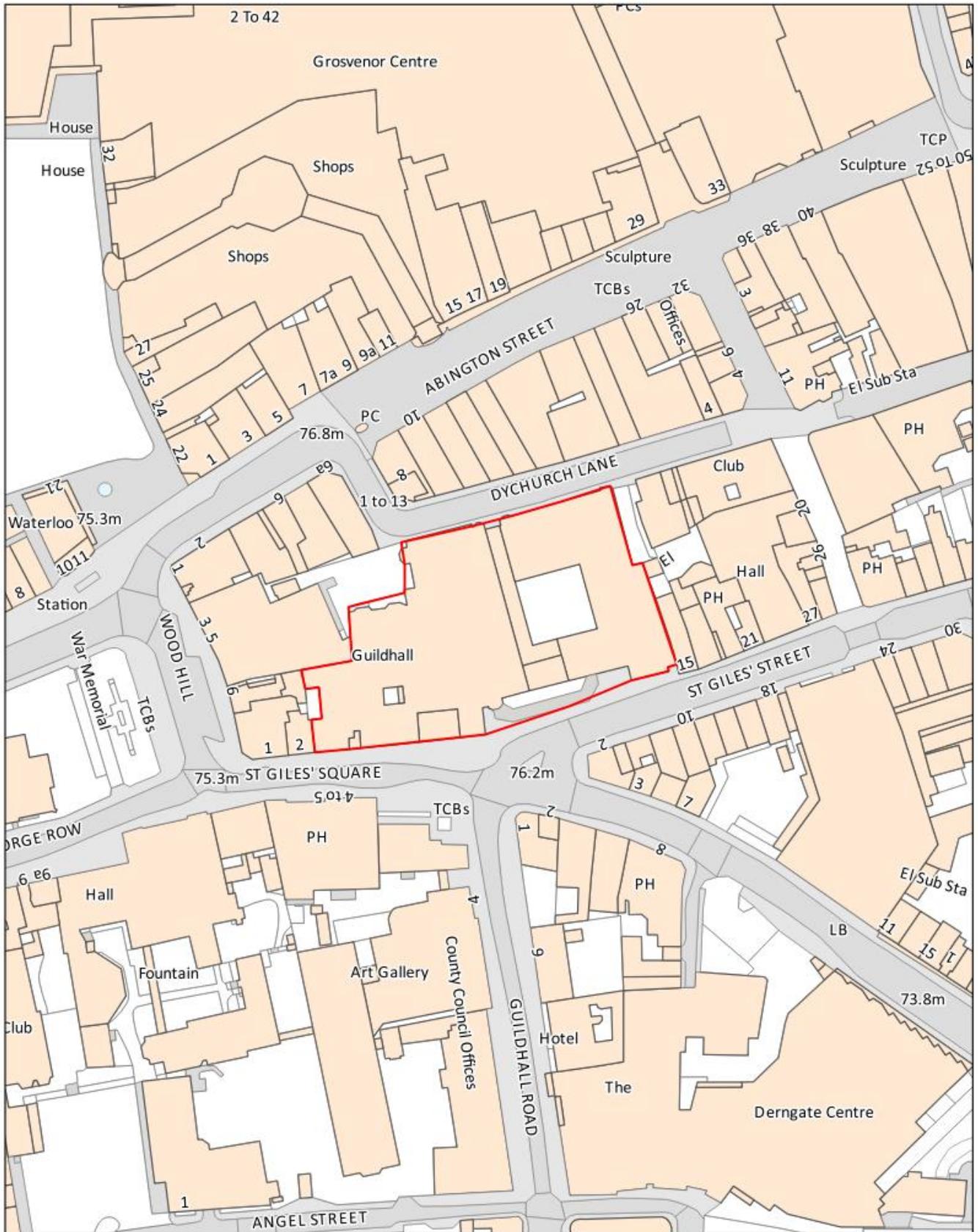
- 11.1 N/2020/0328.

12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The development is not CIL liable.

13 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 13.1 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.



Title: **The Guildhall**

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Date: 28-05-2020

Scale: 1:1,250

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