

Report of the Head of Development Management and Building Control

Address: CIVIC CENTRE HIGH STREET UXBRIDGE

Development: Alterations to the existing covered walkway (2nd level of the building) between the Corporate entrance and the Middlesex Suite to form a fully enclosed link by installing new windows and glazed screens. Formation of new entrance door (1st level of the building) to 1 North Quadrant.

LBH Ref Nos: 14805/APP/2023/3254

Drawing Nos: ALP003 Rev B
APL010 Rev C
Design and Access Statement (revised - 22.12.23)
APL015 Rev B
APL012 Rev C
APL005 Rev C
APL004 Rev B
APL001 Rev D
APL002 Rev A
APL013 Rev A
APL011 Rev B
APL014 Rev A

Date Plans received: 10-11-2023 **Date(s) of Amendments(s):** 10-11-2023
01-02-2024

Date Application valid 14-11-2023

1. SUMMARY

The application site comprises the Civic Centre on the High Street, Uxbridge which is a Grade II Listed Building. The application proposes alterations to the existing covered walkway at (Level 2) between the Corporate entrance and the Middlesex Suite to form a fully enclosed link by installing new windows and glazed screens. This would transform an exterior section of the building into additional internal floor space to be used in association with the building use. In addition, the application seeks to form a new entrance door (Level 1) to 1 North Quadrant which would be situated adjacent to an existing entrance. The planning application is accompanied by an application for listed building consent (also on this committee agenda) for the proposed external and internal works to the Grade II listed building (ref.14805/APP/2023/3274).

The assessment has taken into consideration the impact these alterations would have on the historic fabric of the Listed Building as well as the local character. The Conservation Officer has been consulted and confirmed that the proposal would result in some harm to the designated heritage asset due to the removal of the original wooden small paned screen and entrance doors at the north end of the walkway and original brickwork. The Conservation Officer also notes that the harm level is

less than substantial and at the lower end of the scale. In accordance with Para 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, where development will lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

There is a clear public benefit in the improvement of access to public services that would outweigh the less than substantial harm in this case. The additional space provided to the public building would also contribute to improving the optimum viable use of the building in accordance with the NPPF (Para 208). As such, whilst less than substantial harm has been identified, the public benefit would outweigh this harm and is therefore acceptable.

No other significant issues are identified and the proposal is considered to comply with the development plan. Consequently, it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to the conditions set out below.

2. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL subject to the following:

1. COM3 Time Limit

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON

To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. COM4 Accordance with Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans:

APL001 Rev D
APL004 Rev B
APL005 Rev C
APL010 Rev C
APL011 Rev B
APL012 Rev C
APL013 Rev A
APL014 Rev A
APL015 Rev B

and shall thereafter be retained/maintained for as long as the development remains in existence.

REASON

To ensure the development complies with the provisions of Hillingdon Local Plan Parts 1 (November 2012) and 2 (January 2020) and the London Plan (2021).

3. COM7 Materials (Submission)

No development shall take place until details of all materials and external surfaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and be retained as such.

Details should include information relating to make, product/type, colour and photographs/images.

REASON

To ensure that the development presents a satisfactory appearance in accordance with Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020).

4. NONSC **Non Standard Condition**

The entrance doorway hereby approved shall ensure that step-free access, via a profiled threshold or water bar not exceeding 15 mm in height for wheelchair users is maintained from the external environment in accordance with London Plan policy D5. The door levers shall each achieve a clear opening width of 1000 mm, or shall be fitted with an automatic door operator that opens both doors simultaneously, to achieve a combined clear opening width no less than 1000 mm. All such provisions shall remain in place for the life of the building.

REASON:

To ensure an Accessible and Inclusive development for everyone in accordance with London Plan policy D5.

INFORMATIVES

1. I52 **Compulsory Informative (1)**

The decision to GRANT planning permission has been taken having regard to all relevant planning legislation, regulations, guidance, circulars and Council policies, including The Human Rights Act (1998) (HRA 1998) which makes it unlawful for the Council to act incompatibly with Convention rights, specifically Article 6 (right to a fair hearing); Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life); Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination).

2.

Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of your development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting cadentgas.com/diversions.

Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on www.linesearchbeforeudig.co.uk to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to.

3.

The applicant is advised that fixtures, fittings and furnishings should comply with BSI Standards BS 8300:2018 and BS 223 including the selection of an appropriate acoustic absorbency for each surface.

I53 Compulsory Informative (2)

The decision to GRANT planning permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (2012) and Part 2 (2020) set out below, including Supplementary Planning Guidance, and to all relevant material considerations, including The London Plan (2021) and national guidance.

DMEI 2	Reducing Carbon Emissions
DMHB 1	Heritage Assets
DMHB 11	Design of New Development
DMHB 12	Streets and Public Realm
DMHB 2	Listed Buildings
DMT 6	Vehicle Parking
DMTC 1	Town Centre Development
LPP D3	(2021) Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
LPP D5	(2021) Inclusive design
LPP D8	(2021) Public realm
LPP HC1	(2021) Heritage conservation and growth
NPPF12	NPPF 2021 - Achieving well-designed places
NPPF16	NPPF 2021 - Conserving & enhancing the historic environment
NPPF2	NPPF 2021 - Achieving sustainable development
NPPF4	NPPF 2021 - Decision-Making
NPPF7	NPPF 2021 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

3. CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Site and Locality

The application site comprises the Civic Centre on the High Street, Uxbridge. The building is Grade II listed.

The Civic Centre is sited on an irregularly-shaped corner plot, between the High Street to the approximate north, and the curving dual-carriageway of Hillingdon Road to the east and south. The building is accessed across a large square which opens up from the High Street. The main entrance is to the south of the square. Behind, the council offices have a diamond-shaped footprint and a stepped profile of three and four storeys, set over a semi-basement car park. To the east of the square, connected behind the main entrance, is a second, more irregularly shaped part of the complex. This contains the council chamber, civic suite and registry office, and also has parking beneath.

The application site is not located within a designated Conservation Area, albeit the Old Uxbridge / Windsor Street Conservation Area lies beyond the Civic Centre to the north. The site lies within the

designated Town Centre of Uxbridge.

3.2 Proposed Scheme

The application proposes alterations to the existing covered walkway between the Corporate entrance and the Middlesex Suite to form a fully enclosed link by installing new windows and glazed screens on level 2. In addition, it seeks to form a new entrance door to 1 North Quadrant.

The new entrance door to the North Quadrant would be situated on level 1 of the building. It would be situated adjacent to an existing entrance which serves as a staff entrance to the building. The new opening would be formed in an existing solid wall and would comprise double glazed aluminium doors fixed with anti-reflective coating.

Along the northern elevation of the 2nd level of the Civic Centre, there are a number of minor alterations proposed. A new glazed wall would be installed within the external covered walkway which will transform this section into an internal part of the building which would link up with the access to the Middlesex Suite. The materials to be used in the transformation would involve double glazed aluminium and the new space would also include an additional emergency fire exit.

The existing open brick feature that surrounds the spiral staircase within the covered walkway would be enclosed with similar aluminium glazing. The glazing wall and double doors which link onto the housing benefits interview room would also be replaced with slimline aluminium glazed double door access entrance which would be similar to the existing arrangement. The existing lobby door serving the Middlesex Suite would now be replaced with an aluminium sliding door.

The planning application is accompanied by an application for listed building consent (also on this committee agenda) for the proposed external and internal works to the Grade II listed building (ref.14805/APP/2023/3274).

During the course of the consultation, a number of objections received raised concerns that the scheme appeared to include a change of use of part of the Civic Centre to a Library. It is important to note that this planning application (and associated listed building consent application) do not include a change of use and only seek to alter the access arrangements (1st level) and reconfigure/create new floorspace within the 2nd level of the building (as described above). No decision has been made by the Council in respect of a possible relocation of Uxbridge library and for the avoidance of any doubt, amended plans were submitted for this application which remove any reference to a library. Planning permission for change of use would be required should the Council seek to relocate Uxbridge library to the Civic Centre in the future. Such a planning application would be subject to public consultation.

In addition to the amendments to omit reference to a library, other amendments and clarifications were received during the application process, to amend the location plan, as well as the internal and external works, in response to comments from the Council's Conservation Officer.

Neighbours and consultees were re-consulted on amended plans on 9th January 2024.

3.3 Relevant Planning History

14805/ADV/2019/2 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Informative signage for public visiting Civic Centre

Decision: 19-03-2019 Approved

14805/APP/2018/4038 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Proposed fixing of a new information sign to the external wall (Listed Building Consent)

Decision: 07-03-2019 Approved

14805/APP/2022/1033 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Proposed informative signage (Application for Listed Building Consent)

Decision: 27-05-2022 Approved

14805/APP/2022/1345 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Installation of new access ramp along the perimeter of the civic building constructed within the footprint of planting bed and external steps to provide level access to the terrace external to the South-East entrance of the Civic Centre. A new pit-mounted wheelchair platform lift to provide level access between the external terrace and internal ground floor level (Application for Listed Building Consent).

Decision: 27-06-2022 Approved

14805/APP/2022/2207 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Details pursuant to the discharge of Conditions 5 (lift details), 6 (handrail) and 7 (brickwork and mortar) of Listed Building Consent ref. 14805/APP/2022/1345, dated 27/06/22 (Installation of new access ramp along the perimeter of the civic building constructed within the footprint of planting bed and external steps to provide level access to the terrace external to the South-East entrance of the Civic Centre. A new pit-mounted wheelchair platform lift to provide level access between the external terrace and internal ground floor level).

Decision: 15-09-2022 Approved

14805/APP/2022/3482 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Proposed informative signage (Application for Listed Building Consent)

Decision: 09-01-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/2241 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

The application of plain - silver etch frosted vinyl applied to lower part of the internal windows on the ground floor office in Link 1A, with a reverse cut logo on the window closest to the door (Application for Listed Building Consent) REVISED DESCRIPTION

Decision: 21-09-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/2336 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

The replacement of a failed flat roof covering (behind parapet walls); replacement of defective pv panels on a like-for-like basis. Joinery, brickwork and concrete repairs; the replacement of single glazed Crittall windows with double glazed Crittall windows. Installation of air source heat pumps to service yard, with associated screening, and removal of a suspended ceiling within the function suite, all within the Middlesex Suite.

Decision: 06-10-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/2337 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

The replacement of a failed flat roof covering (behind parapet walls); replacement of defective pv panels on a like-for-like basis. Joinery, brickwork and concrete repairs; the replacement of single glazed Crittall windows with double glazed Crittall windows. Installation of air source heat pumps to service yard, with associated screening, and removal of a suspended ceiling within the function suite, all within the Middlesex Suite. (Application for Listed Building Consent).

Decision: 06-10-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/3035 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Installation of 2no. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) on the cooling tower roof, 1no. ASHP on the chimney roof with one thermal buffer, and 4no. ASHPS within the service yard surrounded by a 2.1m high, red metal louvre fencing and one thermal buffer. Replacement of existing timber beams and roof covering of the cooling tower roof. Installation of 9 steel beams to reinforce the existing steel frame in the plant room beneath the roof. On the chimney roof, the paving slabs and stilts will be removed to offset the load of the ASHP and thermal buffer on the supporting roof structure.

Decision: 20-12-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/3037 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Installation of 2no. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) on the cooling tower roof, 1no. ASHP on the chimney roof with one thermal buffer, and 4no. ASHPS within the service yard surrounded by a 2.1m high, red metal louvre fencing and one thermal buffer. Replacement of existing timber beams and roof covering of the cooling tower roof. Installation of 9 steel beams to reinforce the existing steel frame in the plant room beneath the roof. On the chimney roof, the paving slabs and stilts will be removed to offset the load of the ASHP and thermal buffer on the supporting roof structure. Installation of secondary glazing and cavity wall insulation.

Decision: 20-12-2023 Approved

14805/APP/2023/3274 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

Alterations to the existing covered walkway between the Corporate entrance and the Middlesex Suite (2nd level of the building) to form a fully enclosed link by installing new windows and glazed screens. Formation of new entrance door (1st level of the building) to North Quadrant.

Comment on Relevant Planning History

Relevant history listed above.

4. Planning Policies and Standards

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the London Borough of Hillingdon currently consists of the following documents:

The Local Plan Part 1 - Strategic Policies (2012)
The Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020)
The Local Plan Part 2 - Site Allocations and Designations (2020)
The West London Waste Plan (2015)
The London Plan (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) is also a material consideration in planning decisions, as well as relevant supplementary planning documents and guidance.

Local Plan Designation and London Plan

The following Local Plan Policies are considered relevant to the application:-

Part 1 Policies:

PT1.HE1 (2012) Heritage

PT1.BE1 (2012) Built Environment

Part 2 Policies:

DMEI 2 Reducing Carbon Emissions

DMHB 1 Heritage Assets

DMHB 2 Listed Buildings

DMHB 11 Design of New Development

DMHB 12 Streets and Public Realm

DMTC 1 Town Centre Development

DMT 6 Vehicle Parking

NPPF2 NPPF 2021 - Achieving sustainable development

Hillingdon Planning Committee - 14th February 2024

PART 1 - MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS

NPPF4 NPPF 2021 - Decision-Making
NPPF7 NPPF 2021 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
NPPF12 NPPF 2021 - Achieving well-designed places
NPPF16 NPPF 2021 - Conserving & enhancing the historic environment
LPP HC1 (2021) Heritage conservation and growth
LPP D3 (2021) Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
LPP D5 (2021) Inclusive design
LPP D8 (2021) Public realm

5. Advertisement and Site Notice

5.1 Advertisement Expiry Date: **14th February 2024**

5.2 Site Notice Expiry Date: Not applicable

6. Consultations

External Consultees

93 neighbouring properties and The Mall Pavilions were consulted by letter dated 21st of November 2023.

As previously noted, neighbours and consultees were re-consulted on amended plans on 9th January 2024. This re-consultation also included the erection of a new site notice and the publication of a new press notice. The latest consultation deadline (the press notice) expires on 14th February 2024. Any comments received following the publication of this Committee Report will be reported to Members in an Addendum.

Three representations were received from residents in response to the initial consultation and are summarised below:

- Concerns regarding mention of the relocation of Uxbridge Library to the Middlesex Suite in the Civic Centre within the application.
- Concerns relating to the design, location and principle of proposed Library.

In response to the re-consultation, one representation was received and is summarised below:

- Concerns regarding the removal of the mention of the relocation of Uxbridge Library to the Middlesex Suite in the Civic Centre within the application. It disguises the amended documents with all references to the proposed use as a library removed despite the design remaining the same.
- Concerns relating to the design, location and principle of proposed Library

Hillingdon Planning Committee - 14th February 2024

PART 1 - MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS

Planning Officer Comment:

Whilst Officers acknowledge comments raised by the public on the potential use of part of the building as a library, as previously clarified, this application does not include a change of use to a library. Accordingly, the plans and Design & Access Statement were revised to remove reference to a library.

The layout of the scheme does continue to show internal alterations to the Civic Centre from the existing layout. However, this internal rearrangement does not impact upon the historic fabric (the interior of the building does not form part of the Grade II Listing) and remains within the same planning use, therefore these works do not require formal planning or listed building consent and thus are not discussed within the assessment. The Conservation Officer has not raised concerns regarding the fixtures and fittings to the wider building and the use would remain a Civic Centre.

One representation was received from Cadent Gas:

Cadent Gas:

No objection, informative note required. To prevent damage to our assets or interference with our rights, please add the following Informative Note into the Decision Notice:

"Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of your development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting cadentgas.com/diversions.

Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on www.linesearchbeforeudig.co.uk to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to."

Planning Officer Comment:

The informative recommended by Cadent Gas has been included in the Officer recommendation at section 2 of this report.

Internal Consultees

CONSERVATION OFFICER (summarised):

1. Background

The Civic Centre dates from 1973-1979 by Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall (RMJM) and is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons (taken from the list description):

Architectural interest: as an early example of English Post-Modernism which creatively reinterprets the Arts and Crafts tradition as an expressive composition of revivalist form and detail; * through its planning and elevational treatment the building's large mass is broken down into more intimate spaces and forms, offering a revised approach to civic architecture; * for its high level of craftsmanship, with a creative take on traditional brickwork detail, finely executed; * the building stands little altered externally, complete with extensive integrated hard landscaping.

Historic interest: * as one of the first major works in England by a Modernist architect to embrace an overtly historicist aesthetic, marking the emergence of a new architectural zeitgeist.

The interior of the building (that is, those areas enclosed on all sides) is not of special architectural or historic interest.

The site is within the Old Uxbridge/Windsor Street Conservation Area.

2. Proposal

Alterations are proposed to the corporate entrance area (which are not part of the listing) and the covered walkway to the south which will be enclosed in a contemporary fashion with large, glazed panels to link it to the Middlesex Suite.

The proposal also seeks to create a new entrance to 1 North Quadrant by removing original brickwork to create a door opening of similar size to that adjacent to provide independent access to the services in this area.

There have been informal pre-application discussions in relation to this application.

3. Impact

The design approach is to install clearly modern insertions so that the original design and features remain legible rather than to attempt to match the existing which is an acceptable conservation approach.

Large, glazed panels with thin dark grey (RAL 7012) aluminium frames will infill the openings of the walkway and staircase and screen off the area. To mitigate their impact, all new fixings will be in the existing mortar or fixed on the internal side of the wall and ultimately this aspect of the proposal would be easily reversible. One suggested further area of mitigation would be to ensure that the glazing on the external elevations is anti-reflective.

The existing patterned brick floor will remain undisturbed with the proposal. The doorway into the Middlesex Suite is not original and its replacement is therefore acceptable.

The only area of concern is the removal of the original wooden small paned screen and entrance doors at the north end of the walkway. Its removal is considered harmful as it is original, the harm would be less than substantial at the lower end and the NPPF 208 test regarding public benefit will need to be applied. The replacement screen mitigates some of the impact by replicating the off-centre position of the original doors and vertical rhythm of the existing.

The creation of a new entrance door for 1 North Quadrant will also impact original fabric and is considered to be less than substantial harm at the lowest end. The replacement doors are clearly modern in contrast to the adjacent original small paned wooden doors. Although technically on the front elevation the entrance is screened by the ramp to the front and not seen from the public sphere. It is also set well back within the alcove.

Conclusion

Broadly acceptable although there are aspects that affect original fabric which are considered to be less than substantial harm at the lower end requiring the NPPF 208 test regarding public benefit.

Following revised plans, the Conservation Officer was reconsulted and provided the following comments:

Amended plans show that the external glazing for the covered walkway will have anti-reflection coating. This is welcome and will minimise the visual impact of the glazing when seen from the surrounding area. The proposal does still impact historic fabric and there is therefore some harm to the listed building. The harm remains less than substantial at the lower end and will need to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

HIGHWAYS:

There are no objections from the Highways Authority for this proposal.

ACCESS OFFICER (summary):

The latest plans for the covered walkway proposal between the Civic Centre Corporate entrance and Middlesex Suite have been revised following consultation meetings and a site visit with the Council's Corporate Programme Works team. The plans are now acceptable as the following provisions have been agreed:

- Automatic doors will be installed between corporate reception and the new covered walkway;
- A Changing Places room is now shown on plan;
- Details of fixtures and fittings in accordance with BS 8300:2018 are to be agreed and discharged at the appropriate stage.

The proposal to separate the staff and Housing Needs entrances, which currently share an entrance lobby, does not raise any accessibility concerns subject to the following condition being attached to any approval: The entrance doorway hereby approved shall ensure that step-free access, via a profiled threshold or water bar not exceeding 15 mm in height for wheelchair users is maintained from the external environment in accordance with London Plan policy D5. The door levers shall each achieve a clear opening width of 1000 mm, or shall be fitted with an automatic door operator that opens both doors simultaneously, to achieve a combined clear opening width no less than 1000 mm. All such provisions shall remain in place for the life of the building. REASON: To ensure an Accessible and Inclusive development for everyone in accordance with London Plan policy D5.

Planning Officer Comment:

The internal fittings and fixings in the reconfigured internal spaces do not require formal planning or listed building consent. As such, a condition regarding compliance with BS8300:2018 cannot be included, as it would not meet the NPPF tests for conditions. Instead, an informative note has been included in the recommendation.

The condition (recommended by the Access Officer) relating to the proposed new external door has been included in the recommendation in section 2 of this Committee Report.

7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

7.01 The principle of the development

The site is located in the developed area of the Borough, within the designated Town Centre. The proposals relate to the Civic Centre and the improvement of access to/within a public building. The

proposed alterations are considered acceptable in principle subject to compliance with relevant policies discussed in this report.

7.02 Density of the proposed development

Not applicable.

7.03 Impact on archaeology/CAs/LBs or Areas of Special Character

The impacts on the listed building, the conservation area and the appearance of the area are addressed in section 7.07 of this report.

7.04 Airport safeguarding

Not applicable.

7.05 Impact on the green belt

Not applicable.

7.07 Impact on the character & appearance of the area

This section of the report considers the street scene and character impact of the development, and the impact on heritage assets.

POLICY CONTEXT:

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, imposes a statutory duty on Local Planning Authorities requiring that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority 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.

The NPPF at Chapter 16, places great importance on the protection of heritage assets. Of particular relevance to this development proposal are the following two paragraphs:

'205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's 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.'

'208. 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) states, inter alia, that 'development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.'

Policy HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012) states that the Council will conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, its settings and the wider historic landscape (including locally and statutorily Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas,

Areas of Special Local Character and Archaeological Priority Zones and Areas), and encourage the reuse, modification and regeneration of historic assets.

Policy DMHB 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) states that the Council will expect development proposals to avoid harm to the historic environment and to prevent the loss of significance or harm to the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets.

Policy DMHB 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) will only permit developments that retain the significance and value of Listed Buildings whilst being appropriate in terms of the fabric, historic integrity, spatial quality and layout of the building. In addition, any alterations or additions to a Listed Building should be sympathetic in terms of scale, proportion, detailed design, materials and workmanship.

ASSESSMENT:

The property is a Grade II Listed Building which is situated adjacent to the Old Uxbridge / Windsor Street Conservation Area. Historic England's Listing acknowledges the building as an early example of English Post-Modernism which creatively reinterprets the Arts and Crafts traditions. The listing describes the building's exterior as noteworthy of listing with its complex and varied design. Its overall aesthetics is defined by dramatic roof-lines and modelling executed in the warm tones of brick and tile. It is noted as declared on the Listing that the interior of the building (that is those enclosed on all sides) is not of special architectural or historic interest.

The planning application deals specifically with alterations to two specific sections of the building which affect the external area at level 1 and 2.

The changes on level 2 are situated towards the eastern side of the building. Currently the existing link from the Corporate entrance area to the Middlesex Suite is via a covered walkway. It is proposed to enclose a section of this walkway to create an internal space which would be enclosed by aluminium frames. The proposed material would be enclosed in a contemporary fashion with large, glazed panels linking it to the Middlesex Suite.

The large, glazed panels with thin dark grey (RAL 7012) aluminium frames would infill the openings of the walkway and staircase and screen off the area. Whilst it is acknowledged that the new materials would be contemporary in style, they would however have a light weight appearance in the context of the predominant brick form. The positioning of these panels would not be overly prominent in the wider building context and as such would not impact significantly on the historic fabric of the building as a whole. The modern insertions would ensure that the original design and features remain legible. Further mitigation measures have been adopted to ensure the protection of the designated building. These measures include that all new fixings would be in the existing mortar or fixed on the internal side of the wall. Following comments from the Council's Conservation Officer, revisions were sought to mitigate the impact further by ensuring that the glazing on the external elevations would be anti-reflective, which would minimise the visual impact of the glazing when seen from the wider surrounding area. The Conservation Officer has raised no objection to this part of the scheme and it is considered that this aspect of the proposal would be easily reversible.

The existing doorway serving the Middlesex Suite would be removed as part of the changes. The current door appears to be a hardwood timber double door which links to the covered walkway. As this covered walkway would be enclosed, there is scope to install a light-weight replacement door.

Given that the existing door is also non-original, the Conservation Officer has raised no objections to its removal. The replacement sliding door with double glazed aluminium is considered acceptable. It is noted that the existing patterned brick floor will remain undisturbed which ensures that the original fabric remains intact.

The Council's Conservation Officer highlighted some concern regarding the removal of the original wooden small paned screen and entrance doors at the north end of the walkway. The removal of these elements are considered harmful as they are original. It is noted that the low brick plinth is to be retained and the replacement screen mitigates some of the impact by replicating the off-centre position of the original doors and vertical rhythm of the existing. As such, the harm would be less than substantial at the lower end.

The proposal also includes modest alterations at Level 1 towards the western side of the building. It seeks to create a new entrance beside the existing entrance at 1 North Quadrant. The existing arrangement has a single entrance point from the courtyard for staff and members of the public that leads onto a common lobby area. Rather than lying flush with the outer elevation wall, the existing entrance is set back within an alcove thereby only partially visible from the outer facade. The proposed new entrance would have a similar arrangement to the existing entrance with it set back from the facade. In order to create this new entrance, it would require removing original brickwork to create a door opening of similar size.

The Conservation Officer has noted that the creation of a new entrance door would impact the original fabric (by removal of brickwork). The comments also note that this level of impact would be less than substantial harm and situated at the lowest end of the scale. The replacement doors are modern, contrasting to the adjacent original small paned wooden doors. Whilst this element of the proposal is sited on the front elevation, the entrance is screened by the ramp to the front, therefore is not prominent in the public sphere. In addition, it is also set well back within the alcove.

Summary of works/ Weighing the harm against the Public Benefit

It is considered that cumulatively, the proposal would result in some harm to the grade II listed building, in particular the removal of the original wooden small paned screen and entrance doors at the north end of the walkway and original brickwork.

The applicant has worked with Officers (including the Council's Conservation Officer) in order to minimise the impact of the proposals on the building and its setting. It is concluded that the resulting harm would be 'less than substantial' at the lower end of the spectrum, requiring the NPPF paragraph 208 test (detailed above) to be applied.

It is considered that there is a clear public benefit in the improvement of access to services. The access arrangements include improvements to staff entrances as well as public entrances. The Access Officer has raised no objections to the entrances proposed and the additional access points including the use of automatic doors would ensure that the public access point would be accessible to all.

There would also be improvements and modifications to the layout of the Public Building which would contribute towards securing its optimum viable use in accordance with Para 208 (NPPF). An additional area of floorspace of the covered walkway (at 2nd level) would now become internally part of the building. This represents a small increase in optimising the level of floor area within the site. The Conservation Officer did not consider this section of the scheme unacceptable and as such, it

would be considered a public benefit in the provision of additional space associated with the Civic Centre use.

When weighing up the harm to the designated building against the public benefit, Officers would highlight the Conservation Officer's comments indicate that the level of harm (less than substantial) is at the lower end of the scale. It is noted that some of the proposed works would be visible from the public realm, however they would not be unduly prominent for the reasons explained above. As such, the impact on the historic fabric of the building would be minimal. It is considered that the clear public benefits outweigh the identified less than substantial harm to the listed building in this case and therefore the proposal complies with Para 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

In terms of the setting of the nearby conservation area, it is considered that the proposed works would be unlikely to be detectable from Old Uxbridge / Windsor Street Conservation Area given their location on level 1 and 2. Officers are therefore satisfied there would be no harm to the significance of the nearby designated Conservation Area and its setting.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and that the less than substantial harm caused to the Grade II listed building would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. Consequently, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies HE1 and BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (November 2012), Policies DMHB 1, DMHB 2, DMHB 4, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020), Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan, and Chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

7.08 Impact on neighbours

Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies (2012) states that all new development should seek to protect the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential properties.

Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) states that development proposals should not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space.

The proposal relates to the Civic Centre which lies on Uxbridge High Street and a significant distance from residential neighbouring properties. Given the nature of the proposal and the separation from residential properties, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic (2012) and Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020).

7.09 Living conditions for future occupiers

Not applicable.

7.10 Traffic impact, Car/cycle parking, pedestrian safety

The parking provision and traffic generation would remain unaffected by the proposal, in accordance with Policy DMT 6 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies (2020). Furthermore, the Highways Officer has no objections to the proposal.

7.11 Urban design, access and security

Discussed where relevant in other sections of this report.

7.12 Disabled access

In terms of access arrangements, the proposal would be adding an additional access point at level 1 which would improve access to the building. Access arrangement at level 2 would be improved overall. The Council's Access Officer was consulted on the scheme and initially raised a number of points in regard the routeways, width of the doors and details of the fixtures and fittings. It is considered that the matters raised have been satisfactorily addressed in the revisions to the scheme which have been submitted during the application process. The proposal is now considered acceptable with regard to access considerations, subject to the inclusion of Condition 4, which relates to the proposed new level 1 entrance door.

7.13 Provision of affordable & special needs housing

Not applicable.

7.14 Trees, landscaping and Ecology

The Civic Centre building has been noted for its architecture quality of its time and received Listed Building status for its overall design. The building has a mixture of both hard and soft landscaped areas spread throughout the site which contribute to the aesthetics, as well as adding an important level of ecology/biodiversity to the space.

In terms of the current application, it is noted there are no areas of soft landscaping or trees affected by the development. No soft landscaping or trees will be removed. Whilst efforts are always made to improve tree planting and soft landscaping to a municipal public building/site, in this instance this would not be appropriate given the location of the development. The proposed works are situated largely within a enclosed walkway and of modest scale. The development would internalise a section of this walkway. The location would not be suitable for adding soft planting. Officers are therefore satisfied as there are no existing soft planting/trees impacted by the development, a condition is unnecessary to provide further planting/landscaping in this instance.

7.15 Sustainable waste management

Not applicable.

7.16 Renewable energy / Sustainability

Not applicable.

7.17 Flooding or Drainage Issues

Not applicable.

7.18 Noise or Air Quality Issues

Not applicable.

7.19 Comments on Public Consultations

Please see section 6 of the report.

7.20 Planning obligations

Not applicable.

7.21 Expediency of enforcement action

Not applicable.

7.22 Other Issues

No other significant issues are raised having regard to the nature of the proposed works.

8. Observations of the Borough Solicitor

General

Members must determine planning applications having due regard to the provisions of the development plan so far as material to the application, any local finance considerations so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations (including regional and national policy and guidance). Members must also determine applications in accordance with all relevant primary and secondary legislation.

Material considerations are those which are relevant to regulating the development and use of land in the public interest. The considerations must fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned.

Members should also ensure that their involvement in the determination of planning applications adheres to the Members Code of Conduct as adopted by Full Council and also the guidance contained in Probity in Planning, 2009.

Planning Conditions

Members may decide to grant planning consent subject to conditions. Planning consent should not be refused where planning conditions can overcome a reason for refusal. Planning conditions should only be imposed where Members are satisfied that imposing the conditions are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Where conditions are imposed, the Council is required to provide full reasons for imposing those conditions.

Planning Obligations

Members must be satisfied that any planning obligations to be secured by way of an agreement or undertaking pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. The obligations must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related to the scale and kind to the development (Regulation 122 of Community Infrastructure Levy 2010).

Equalities and Human Rights

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010, requires the Council, in considering planning applications to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations between people who have different protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The requirement to have due regard to the above goals means that members should consider whether persons with particular protected characteristics would be affected by a proposal when compared to persons who do not share that protected characteristic. Where equalities issues arise, members should weigh up the equalities impact of the proposals against the other material considerations relating to the planning application. Equalities impacts are not necessarily decisive, but the objective of advancing equalities must be taken into account in weighing up the merits of an application. The weight to be given to any equalities issues is a matter for the decision maker to determine in all of the circumstances.

Members should also consider whether a planning decision would affect human rights, in particular

the right to a fair hearing, the right to respect for private and family life, the protection of property and the prohibition of discrimination. Any decision must be proportionate and achieve a fair balance between private interests and the public interest.

9. Observations of the Director of Finance

Not applicable.

10. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with national, regional, and local planning policies and guidance. Therefore, it is recommended that the application be approved.

11. Reference Documents

Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012)

Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020)

The London Plan (2021)

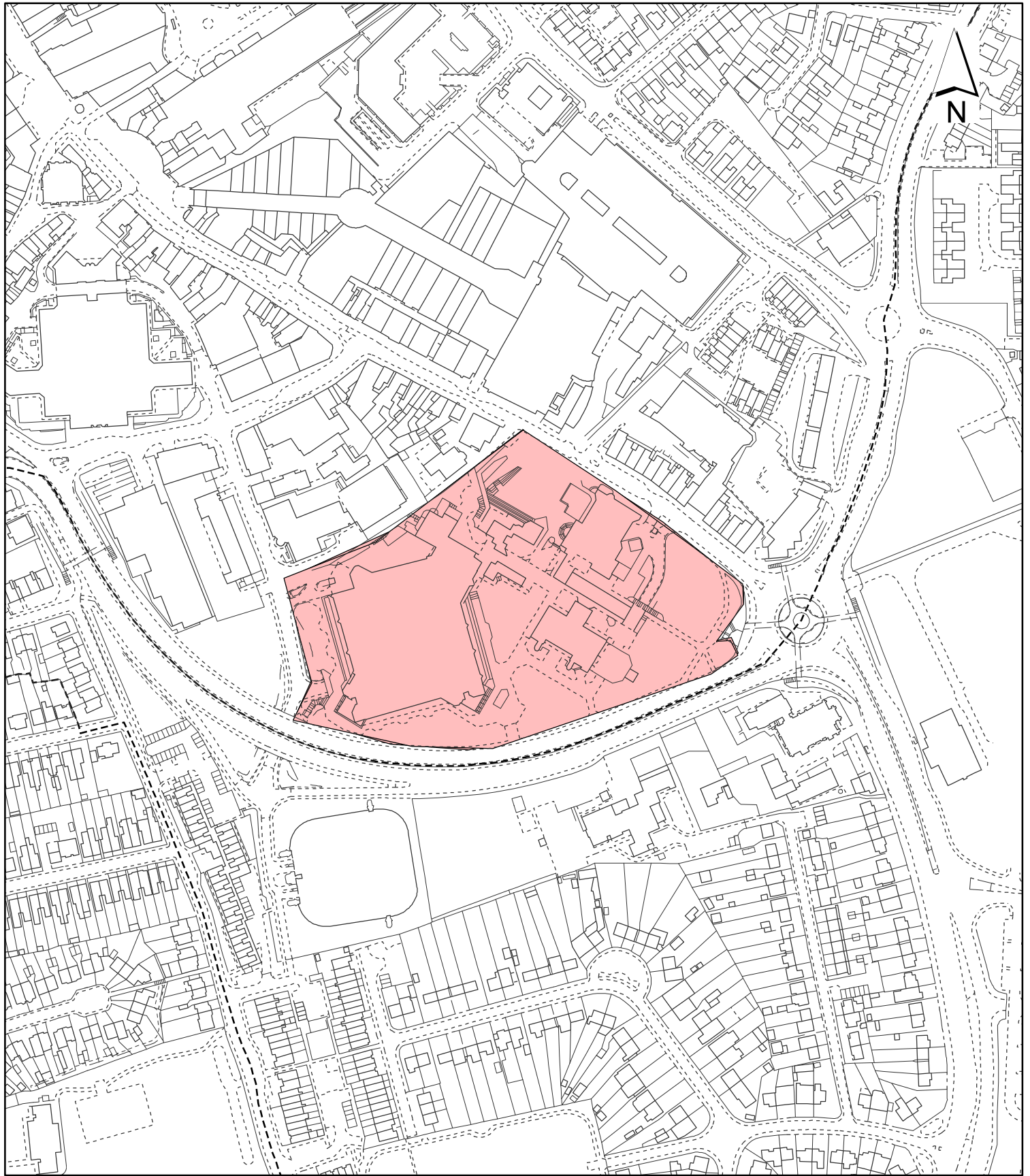
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Contact Officer:

Emilie Bateman

Telephone No:

01895 250230



Notes:

 Site boundary

For identification purposes only.
 This copy has been made by or with the authority of the Head of Committee Services pursuant to section 47 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (the Act).
 Unless the Act provides a relevant exception to copyright.
 © Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 100019283

Site Address:

Civic Centre

LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON
Residents Services
Planning Section

Civic Centre, Uxbridge, Middx. UB8 1UW
 Telephone No.: Uxbridge 01895 250111

Planning Application Ref:

14805/APP/2023/3254

Scale:

1:3,000

Planning Committee:

Minor

Date:

February 2024



HILLINGDON
 LONDON