

Report of the Head of Development Management and Building Control Committee Report Part 2 – Application Report

Case Officer: **Pedro Rizo** **14805/APP/2024/956**

Date Application Valid:	24.04.2024	Statutory / Agreed Determination Deadline:	23.07.2024
Application Type:	Full	Ward:	Uxbridge

Applicant: **London Borough of Hillingdon**

Site Address: **Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**

Proposal: **Change of use of Middlesex Suite and Registrar’s Office (Part Level 1 and Level 2) within the Civic Centre Complex from Class E (g) (i) / sui generis to Class F1 to accommodate a new public library and museum, involving minor internal and external alterations and associated works.**

Summary of Recommendation: **GRANT planning permission subject to conditions**

Reason Reported to Committee: **Required under Part 6 of the Planning Scheme of Delegation (the Council is the Applicant)**



Summary of Recommendation:

GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This planning application seeks to change the use of part of the Middlesex Suite and the Registrar's Office from Class E (g) (i) and sui generis use class to a public library and museum (Use Class F1). It is understood that the applicant seeks to relocate the existing public library from its current location at the Uxbridge High Street to the civic complex. In this respect, this application has been appropriately assessed on its own planning merits. The development includes the relocation of the Registrar's Office from the second floor to the first floor within the Civic Centre. In addition, the proposal includes refurbishment works to the main reception area and alterations to the covered walkway between the Corporate Entrance and the Middlesex Suite. The alterations to the covered walkway and proposed signage are also assessed under the associated application for listed building consent, which is also presented to the planning committee (Ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410).
- 1.2 The main issues which shall be addressed within this committee report relate to the principle of the development, the impact on heritage assets/effect on the significance of the Grade II Listed Building, the quality of the proposed F1 floorspace (non-residential institution), the impact on amenity, the implications on transport and highways (including accessibility, provision of car parking, cycle parking, delivery/servicing requirements and waste management), environmental considerations (particularly noise, flooding and contamination), sustainable design and security measures (such as crime prevention and fire safety).
- 1.3 It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions, by reason that the key material planning considerations are acceptable and consistent with local and regional policies, listed in Appendix 3 of this committee report. In addition, all considerations raised within the responses to the public consultation have been addressed and conditions are recommended, which ensure that any adverse impact of the proposal is mitigated against.
- 1.4 The proposed change of use would re-provide floorspace for social infrastructure within the Uxbridge Town Centre and would be compatible with the civic character of the application site. In addition, the quality of the proposed F1 floorspace is acceptable, considering that it would accommodate a range of services, such as public spaces/museum, learning centres, study areas and a children's library in a safe and accessible environment. Furthermore, the proposal includes the operation of a mobile library at first floor, to ensure that residents with no capacity to visit the public library retain access to library services. Servicing arrangements for the mobile library would be positioned at the east side of the site.

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- 1.5 Seven car parking bays are proposed, which would be allocated for blue badge holders. Three of these bays would be located on level 2 and allocated to library users, and the other four bays would be located on level 1 and allocated to users of the Registrar's Office. Both these blue badge parking locations are in proximity to the main entrances of these services with step-free access routes. Step-free access would also be provided to both the first and second floor levels via an internal lift, within the building itself.
- 1.6 In terms of the proposed internal works, the proposed layout and removal of existing partitions would re-instate the original plan form of the Middlesex Suite as a public library. The works would therefore enhance the character and significance of the Grade II Listed Building, as it would ultimately upgrade the internal condition of this section of the building and restore its original layout, features, and function. The proposed changes to the internal layout of the Registrar's Office are also supported, by virtue that these would enhance circulation areas to access public community spaces, such as a public space/museum, a learning centre and study areas. The proposed works to install glazed panels to fully enclose the covered walkways are also acceptable, as assessed under associated application for listed building consent (Ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410).
- 1.7 This committee report seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the planning application and supporting documentation. All material planning considerations have been considered, including responses to public and internal consultation. On balance, Officers are satisfied that the proposed change of use would deliver benefits to the application site in a way that the quality of existing library services within the catchment of the Uxbridge Town Centre would be retained and enhanced. As such, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and informatives, which are set out in Appendix 1 of this committee report.

2 The Site and Locality

- 2.1 The application site comprises the Middlesex Suite and the Registrar's Office, which are positioned at first and second floor levels within the southeast side of the Civic Centre on the High Street, Uxbridge. The building is Grade II Listed and is located between the High Street to the north and a curving dual-carriageway along Hillingdon Road, towards the eastern and southern sides. The site is therefore mainly surrounded by publicly accessible land and contains parking at lower ground floor, which is accessed via the High Street. The parking bays are subject to control points which are equipped with a lift-up barrier.
- 2.2 The Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office are positioned at the southeast side of the host building and sit within an irregular plot of land that comprises the civic complex. The building fronts the civic square and opens onto Uxbridge High Street and therefore is perceived as a focal visual element within the immediate context of the site. This is by virtue of its sense of formality, particularly when observed from public vantage points at the northwest side of the site, along the

Uxbridge High Street. The square also provides access to different sections of the civic complex, such as the council chamber, civic suite, and council offices.

- 2.3 Although the building is not located within a conservation area, the Old Uxbridge/Windsor Street Conservation Area lies towards the northern side of the site. Notwithstanding its position outside the conservation area, the building is Grade II Listed (the Grade II Listing is only external). This heritage listing is due to its architectural and historic interest, as it's one of the first major works by a Modernist architect that is conceived as an example that re-interprets 'Arts and Crafts' through detail and by breaking down massing into smaller spaces and forms, creating a distinct form of civic architecture.
- 2.4 The Middlesex Suite within the building complex was mainly used for civic purposes and its open-plan layout was originally designed for a library, as documented by the library's archives. However, the interior of the building has been altered several times with non-structural partitions, including the blocking-up of walls and original openings. Whilst the site is currently vacant, the space was used for civic purposes, including a cellular office under Class E (g) (i) at first floor and as a rentable catering space with associated function space at second floor level (sui generis). Additionally, the Registrar's Office operates under sui generis use class, as part of the mixed uses within the civic complex.
- 2.5 The site is also located within the Uxbridge Town Centre and has direct access across the civic square onto Uxbridge High Street, which is pedestrianised along the parade of shops towards the west side, with a bus gate that flows towards the south along Vine Street. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) score of 4 to 5, which is considered 'moderate to good', as it's located at approximately 450 metres from Uxbridge Station.
- 2.6 The civic centre has no trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and falls within Flood Zone 1, having a low annual risk of flooding (less than 1 in 1000).

Figure 1: Location Plan (Middlesex Suite & Register's Office edged red)

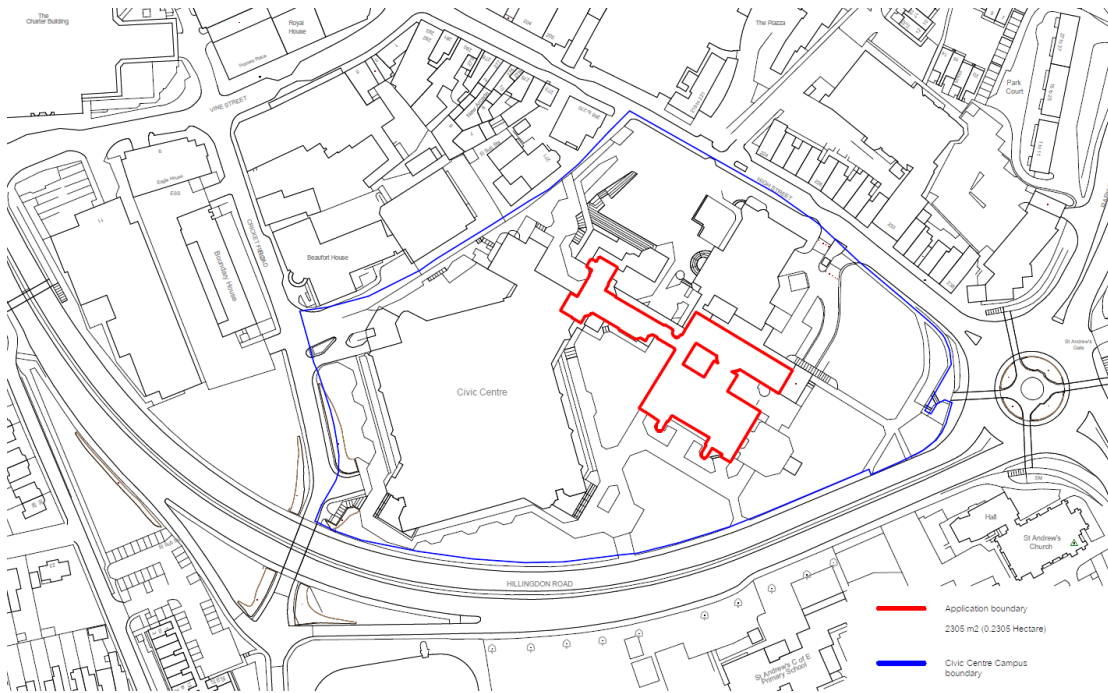


Figure 2: Image of the Corporate Entrance and Public Square



3 Proposal

3.1 This planning application seeks to change the use of part of the Middlesex Suite and the Registrar's Office at first and second floor levels from Class E (g) (i) and sui generis to a public library and museum (Use Class F1). The current Registrar's Office would be moved from the second floor onto the first floor within the same building.

3.2 The proposed library space and museum would be located at second floor and would connect to a refurbished corporate entrance and reception area through an enclosed link. This link would be created by installing glazing to part of the covered walkway between the main corporate entrance and the Middlesex Suite.

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New signage is also proposed. These works are principally assessed under the associated application for listed building consent, which is also being presented to the planning committee (ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410).

- 3.3 The changes to the internal layout seek to reinstate the original openings that have been blocked-up, to form internal spaces with greater visibility across the floor levels. The second floor would also be refurbished to accommodate an upgraded reception area that would link council services and the proposed public library, by providing enhanced community spaces at second floor, such as new meeting rooms and clearer circulation spaces (see *Figure 3 below*). In addition, step free access and a staff entrance to the proposed mobile library would be provided at first floor, which would be serviced from the east side of the building (see *Figure 4 below*).

Figure 3: Proposed Second Floor - Entrance Refurbished (please note – larger version of plans can be found in the Committee Plan Pack)

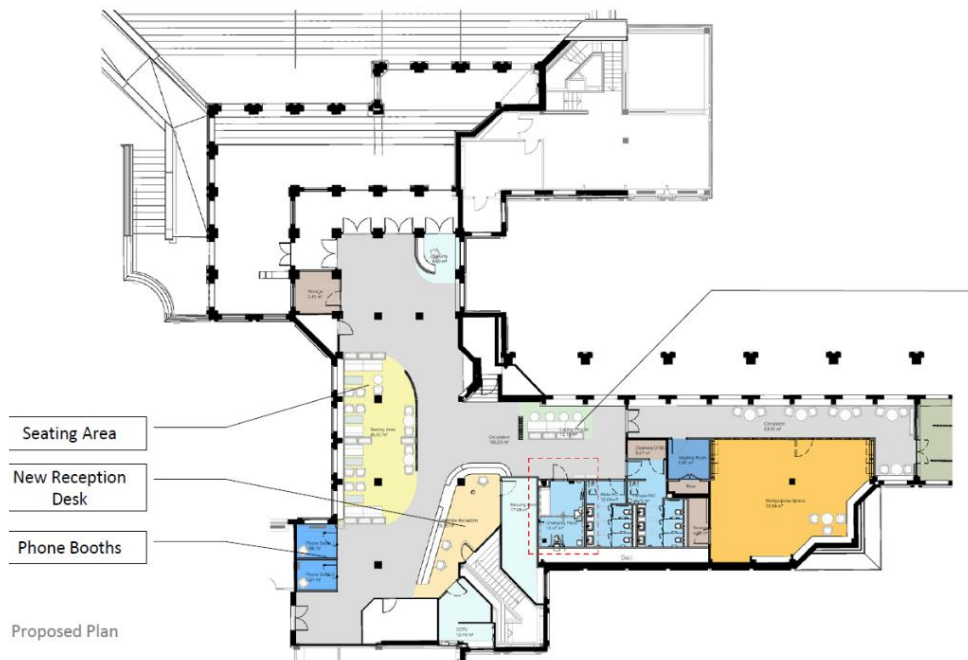
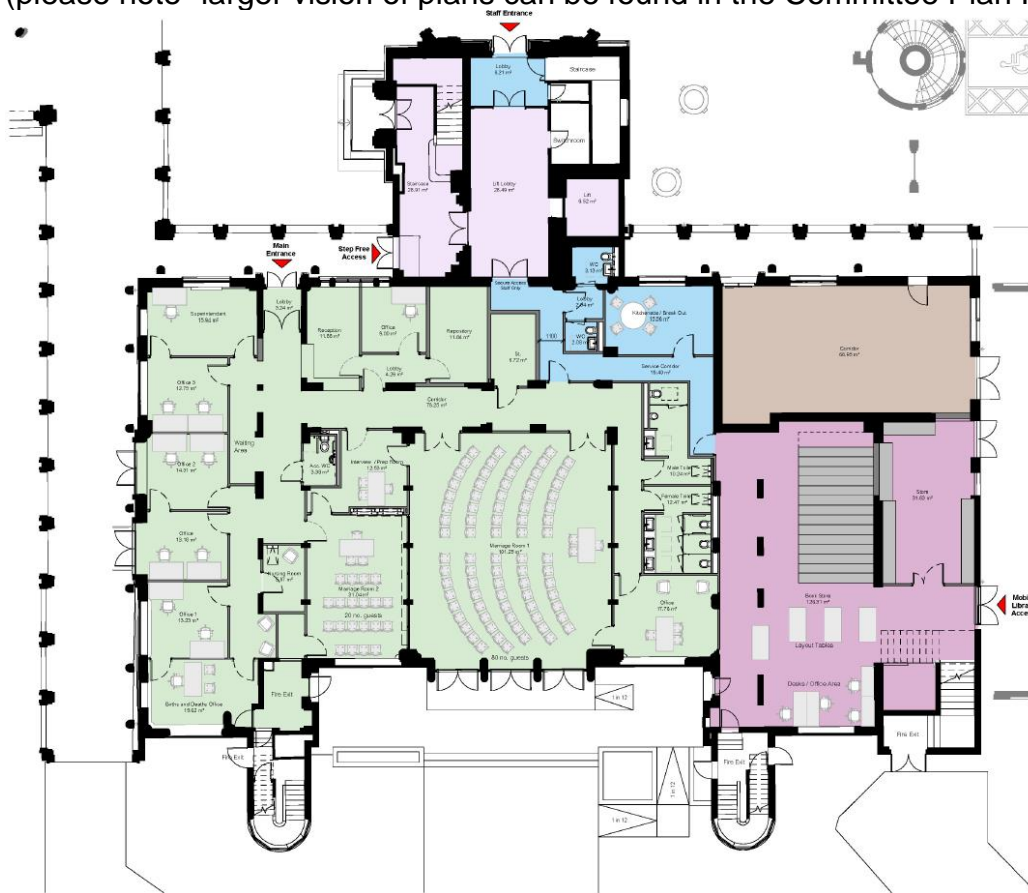


Figure 4: Proposed First Floor Plan – Registrar’s Office & Mobile Library
 (please note- larger vision of plans can be found in the Committee Plan Pack).



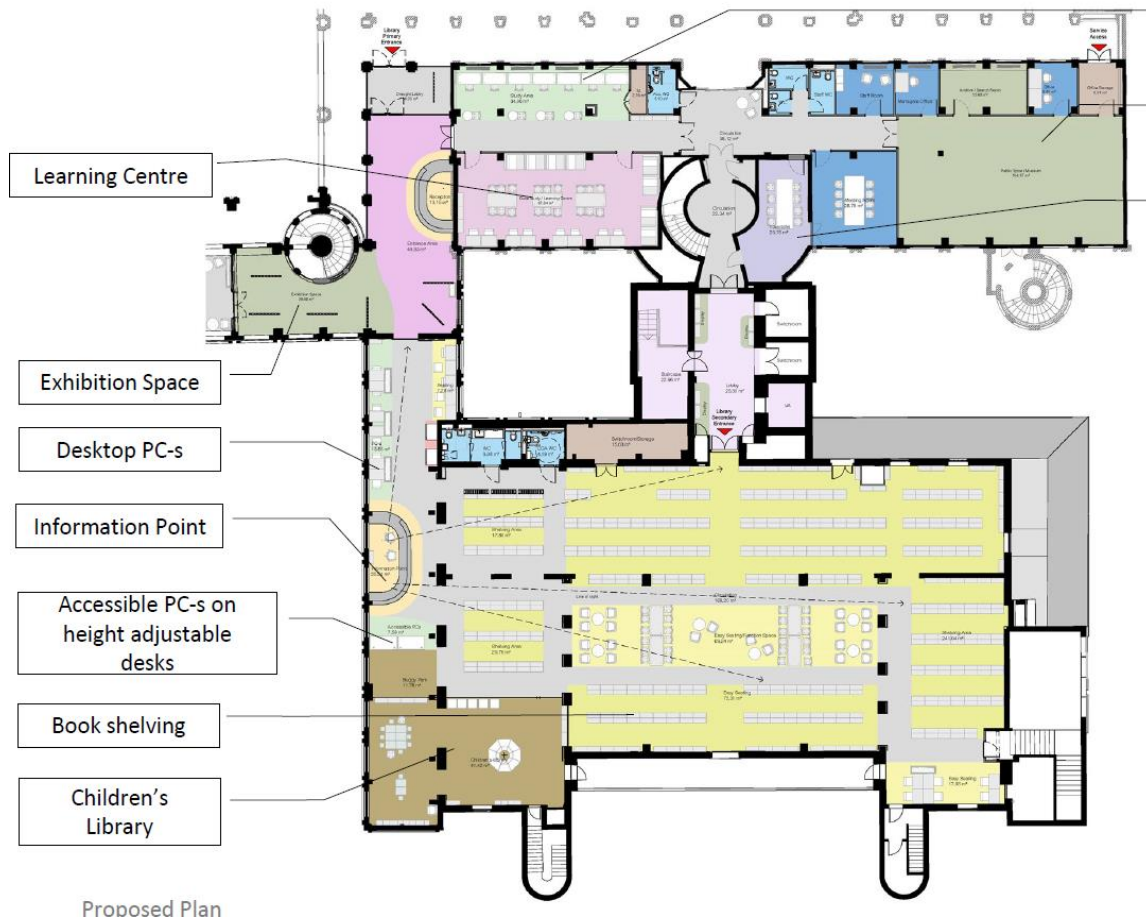
3.4 The original central high ceilings within the proposed library space would be reinstated by the removal of the low-level suspended ceilings and the reinstatement of high-level windows. Moreover, the original high-level Crittal windows that have been blocked would be re-opened to restore the original character and significance of the Grade II Listed Building. These internal works are currently on-going (see *Figure 5* below).

Figure 5: Middlesex Suite – Internal works for re-instating high-level windows and restoring central high ceilings.



- 3.5 The proposed layout for the library at second floor includes a central space for seating, with books and shelves (see *Figure 6 below*). The central area would be served by step-free access to ancillary spaces, including a children's library, a learning centre, study booths, computer areas, information points and an exhibition/museum space. The main entrance would be located at second floor via the covered walkway, which would lead to an information desk with integrated seating areas and multipurpose spaces. A secondary library entrance adjacent to the proposed lift would facilitate accessibility to and from level 1. Step-free access to the public square and other services that the Council provides within the civic complex would be facilitated via the upgraded corporate reception area and existing ramps that front the public square.
- 3.6 In terms of capacity, the proposed floorspace for the library would comprise a total of 2,636.33 sqm and could accommodate approximately 60 visitors for a fixed period of approximately 30 minutes. Capacity is not easy to identify in this instance, by reason that the number, timing, and type of visitors vary during a day. Additionally, the range of activities and services within the proposed F1 floorspace would vary, as it would include a public space/museum, learning centres, study areas, meeting rooms and a children's library.

Figure 6: Proposed Second Floor Plan - Library (please note- larger vision of plans can be found in the Committee Plan Pack)



Amendments during the course of this application

- 3.7 The submitted plans, documents and proposal description were amended on the 29th May 2024. The floorspace within the existing Registrar’s Office at second floor level was incorporated into the proposal for F1 floorspace. This has enabled an uplift to the proposed public library’s size and capacity from 1,820.23 sqm to 2,636.33 sqm. It would also accommodate proposed new community facilities, such as the public space/museum, a study area, exhibition areas and a learning centre.
- 3.8 The revised plans aim to take a holistic view of accessibility to the site and address constraints that result from the statutory listing of the exterior of the building. As such, the associated application for listed building consent (ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410) seeks to upgrade the access and covered walkway by installing new glazing within the link between the Corporate Entrance and the proposed public library. This also includes the installation of new signage to address concerns with regards to legibility and wayfinding.

4 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 A list of the relevant planning history related to the proposal can be found in Appendix 2.

5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 A list of planning policies relevant to the consideration of the application can be found in Appendix 3.

6 Consultations and Representations

- 6.1 248 letters of consultation were sent to neighbouring properties on the 25th April 2024. The application was also advertised via five site notices that were posted near the site on the 25th April 2024. Notices were also displayed at Uxbridge Library, Northwood Hills Library and Botwell Green Library and a press advert was published on the 1st May 2024.
- 6.2 The consultation process resulted in a total of twenty-five representations in objection to the proposal. In addition, a petition containing 834 signatures (online and paper signatories) was submitted in May 2024. The petition statement objects to the application by reason of “building accessibility grounds, inadequate space for a comprehensive library stock, insufficient study space and inadequate community support facilities”. These matters raised are addressed in Table 1 (below).

Re-consultation following amendments

- 6.3 Due to the amendments received in May 2024 and the revised description of the development, 248 letters of re-consultation were sent to neighbouring properties on the 30th May 2024 and four site notices were posted near the site on the 30th May 2024. Notices were again also displayed at Uxbridge Library, Northwood Hills Library and Botwell Green Library. In addition, a press advert was published as part of the re-consultation on the 30th May 2024.
- 6.4 The re-consultation process resulted in a total of 14 representations in objection to the proposal. The matters of concern are also detailed in Table 1 (below). Moreover, an e-petition containing 23 signatories was submitted on the 13th June 2024. This petition notes that the amendments to improve the proposed facilities at the public library are welcomed. However, it is asserted that there is little or no evidence that the proposed facilities would adequately replace those at the current Uxbridge Library location. The petition therefore states that NURA (North Uxbridge Residents Association) objects to the proposed relocation of the library on the grounds that it fails to comply with Policy DMCI 1 which concerns the loss of existing community facilities. This matter is addressed in Table 1 (below).

6.5 Full copies of the consultation responses have been separately made available to Members.

Table 1: Summary of Representations Received

Representations	Summary of Issues Raised	Planning Officer Response
<p><u>Initial Consultation</u></p> <p>Twenty-five individual letters of objection from residents.</p> <p>Petition containing 834 signatures.</p> <p><u>Re-consultation</u></p> <p>Fourteen individual letters of objection from residents.</p> <p>Petition containing 22 signatures.</p>	<p>1. Accessibility: The proposed public library would not be easily accessible, and the existing disabled access fails to meet disability requirements.</p>	<p>The internal works aim to maximise accessibility. The proposed step-free access routes have been reviewed by the Council's Access officer, who accepts the proposed specifications and confirms that the existing gradient of the ramps is acceptable, considering the physical conditions of the site by reason of the Grade II Listing. Further details on this issue are addressed in paragraphs 7.30 – 7.31 of this committee report.</p>
	<p>2. Size of Library floorspace and design: The proposed floorspace would not meet capacity on a growing population and the re-location of the library would result in a reduction in community use. The community spaces would fail to meet demand and would therefore prevent social interaction.</p>	<p>The proposed internal floorspace is assessed in terms of quantum and quality and the provision of 2,636.33 sqm of internal floorspace is considered adequate. The proposed library floorspace would be within one single floor to reduce stepped access to community areas. This planning consideration is assessed in more detail in paragraph 7.27 of this committee report.</p>
	<p>3. Legibility:</p>	<p>The Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office is linked to the public square, which</p>

	<p>The proposed location of the public library would not be convenient and would be hidden away from the High Street.</p>	<p>is a point of reference within the Town Centre. Additionally, the public library would be integrated to other services that the civic complex offers. Clear signage would be provided and a condition requiring a wayfinding strategy is recommended, to respond to the public nature of the proposed use. Further details on this point of concern are addressed in paragraph 7.33 of this committee report.</p>
	<p>4. Evacuation and Safety: The proposed evacuation measures in an emergency would be inadequate, by reason that the public library would not be at ground floor and not directly accessed from the streetscape.</p>	<p>The public library would be at second floor but would have several secondary exit points and would therefore meet Building Regulations. In addition, a condition requiring a fire safety strategy is recommended. An assessment of this planning consideration is in Paragraph 7.63 of this committee report.</p>
	<p>5. Anti-Social Behaviour: The proposed public library would be positioned within an under used part of the civic centre and would cause safety concerns by reason of poor surveillance.</p>	<p>The proposed change of use would reinforce passive surveillance within the civic complex and a condition restricting operating hours is recommended, to address concerns over anti-social behaviour. An assessment of this planning consideration is in Paragraphs 7.55 and 7.64 of this committee report.</p>
	<p>6. Impact on the Town Centre: The proposed re-location of the public library would have a harmful impact on the vitality of the Town</p>	<p>The proposed change of use would not result in a loss of F1 floorspace for a public library within the town centre, as the proposed reprovision would still be located within</p>

	Centre and the Uxbridge High Street.	the catchment areas that it currently serves. Any forthcoming use of the existing floorspace where the current public library is positioned is not a material consideration for the determination of this planning application. An assessment of this issue is carried out in Paragraphs 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9 of this committee report.
	7. Energy and Efficiency: The proposed relocation of the public library would fail to reduce carbon emissions.	The proposed change of use would form part of a comprehensive approach to concentrate council services within one location, resulting in greater efficiency within the civic complex and moving towards the decarbonisation of Council sites. An assessment of this planning consideration is in Paragraphs 7.61 and 7.62 of this committee report.
	8. Parking: The public library would fail to provide disabled parking.	Seven blue badge parking bays (3 for the library and 4 for the Registrar's Office) would be allocated by road markings on existing car parking areas, with direct access from the High Street and within proximity to the proposed public library and re-sited Registrar's Office. A response to this issue is elaborated in Paragraphs 7.44, 7.45, 7.46 and 7.47 of this committee report.
	9. Loss of existing library with inadequate re-provision.	The site of the present Uxbridge library is not subject to this planning application. Any future proposed change of use for that site would be

		<p>subject to consideration under a separate planning application, including the loss of a community facility (policy DMCI 1). This application should be determined on its own planning merits.</p> <p>Nevertheless, whilst this committee report considers the merits of the proposal throughout, paragraphs 7.1 to 7.12 consider the principle of the proposed development, including reference to policy DMCI1.</p>
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Table 2: Summary of Internal Consultee Responses

Consultee and Summary of Comments	Planning Officer Response
<p>Access Officer – Inclusive Design: No concerns are raised in respect to the change of use. However, consideration on the following issues should be noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convenient parking for Blue and Brown badge holders visiting the library should be considered. 2. Alternative routes to the new library should be easy to use without needing to provide advanced notice to Civic Centre security. Details of the alternative entrances should be provided. The approach routes should be well lit to accord with BS 8300:2018. 3. All points of entry should provide a doorway with clear opening width of 1000 mm. Original doors which form part of the listed building and cannot be replaced should be automated as appropriate. 4. Details of fixtures, fittings and furnishings, particularly hard materials should be submitted to support this application. For example, the reception counter should be designed such that people using a wheelchair and of short stature can engage with reception staff and make full use of the facilities offered to customers. It is therefore strongly recommended the entire 	<p>(i) Three parking bays have been identified to provide allocated disabled car parking within the site for library users. This is consistent with planning policy.</p> <p>(ii) Revised drawings have been submitted demonstrating step-free access routes through the Corporate Entrance, from the public square and from the blue-badge parking areas on levels 1 and 2. None of these routes require advance notice to security.</p> <p>(iii) The proposed points of entry would meet the minimum requirements for doorway width. All new doors would be power assisted to aid access. A condition has been</p>

<p>length of the reception counter is set at a height of between 760 mm and 860 mm above the finished floor height. An additional writing surface can be provided at 950 mm and 1,100 mm for taller people.</p>	<p>included requiring the submission of details to demonstrate that existing doors on the proposed routes would be automated in a manner that does not affect the heritage listing.</p> <p>(iv) A condition requiring the submission of details of fixtures and fittings is included to ensure compliance with London Plan policy D5.</p> <p>Accessibility matters are addressed in paragraphs 7.30 and 7.31 of this committee report.</p>
<p>Design and Conservation Officer: Whilst listed building consent is not required for these internal works we believe that the proposals would be positive. They bring the structure back into use, bringing it more closely to its original layout and returning it to its designed use. As such we would welcome the proposal and in particular the opening of the top lantern light and exposing of the columns which would be most beneficial to the space. The character of the building would be better appreciated, and the feel of the modern structure returned to the space which at present is somewhat enclosed and has lost its former grandeur. Therefore, we would support this element of works and recommend approval. The proposed application is supported, and a condition is recommended to agree a paint colour scheme, to ensure that the interior reflects its time and preserves the significance of this pre-war structure, and the proposed internal details match the existing historic features.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>It is recognised that the interior of the building is not listed, and therefore not subject to the associated listed building consent application. Therefore, a condition securing details of the internal finishings on heritage grounds would not meet the tests for conditions, on either application. Nevertheless, an informative has been included advising the applicant to discuss these matters with the Council's heritage officers in due course.</p> <p>Heritage matters are addressed in paragraphs 7.21 and 7.22 of the committee report.</p>
<p>Highways and Transport Officer: The Highways Authority has no concerns regarding the impact on the surrounding road network. The proposed servicing and deliveries within the designated service yard at the east of</p>	<p>Comments noted. Both conditions for a Car Parking Design and Management Plan and details in respect of active</p>

<p>the site are accepted, as these are already operational as part of the civic centre. The proposed car parking spaces within the civic centre car park, which would be available for disabled library visitors is acceptable in terms of quantum and location. Conditions requiring a Car Parking Design and Management Plan and details of active electric charging points are required.</p>	<p>electric charging points for blue badge parking bays are included. These considerations are addressed in paragraphs 7.44 and 7.45 of the committee report.</p>
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7 **Planning Assessment:**

The key issues which shall be addressed within this report are as follows.

Principle of Development

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) states at paragraph 127 that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose, where these would meet identified development needs. They should support proposals to make more effective use of sites that provide community services, in a way that the provision of services is improved or maintained. This approach is reflected in policy GG1 of the London Plan (2021) (*see Appendix 3*), which supports development proposals that provide access to good quality community spaces, services, amenities, and infrastructure that accommodate and strengthen communities, to increase participation and social interaction. Moreover, policy S1 of the London Plan (2021) (*see Appendix 3*) supports high quality, inclusive social infrastructure that addresses a local or strategic need and supports service delivery strategies.
- 7.2 The site sits within the Uxbridge Town Centre and therefore policy SD6 of the London Plan (2021) 'Town Centres and High Streets' (*see Appendix 3*) is also applicable. This policy states that the vitality and viability of London's varied town centres should be promoted by identified locations to deliver a competitive range of services and activities by walking, cycling and public transport in a way that a high-quality environment is secured, and the local character of a site is complemented.
- 7.3 At a local level, policy E4 of the Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) (*see Appendix 3*) sets the objective to improve access to local services and facilities within the Uxbridge Town Centre, including community and cultural facilities, especially for those without a car and for those in remote parts of the borough through well planned routes and integrated public transport. This objective is supported by policy CI2 of the Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) (*see Appendix 3*), which states how Hillingdon is well served by cultural facilities, such as libraries. The policy adds how some facilities need to be upgraded to provide shared facilities to reflect varying interests and seeks to transform libraries to form 'community hubs' that are accessible to all members of the community.

- 7.4 In addition, policy DMTC 1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*) supports development proposals that are consistent with the scale and function of a town centre, considering floorspace for town centre uses with appropriate servicing arrangements. Uxbridge has a Metropolitan Town Centre hierarchy, as set out by policy DMTC 1, by reason of its significant employment, leisure, and services function within a wide catchment. As such, the strategic considerations in respect to the town centre are noted, in line with the requirements set out by London Plan Policy SD6 (2021).
- 7.5 Furthermore, policy DMCI 1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*) states that proposals involving the loss of an existing community facility will be permitted if the specific use is no longer required on-site. In such circumstances, the policy requires evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not lead to a shortfall in provision for a specific use within the local catchment area and that any replacement/relocated facilities for a specific use provide an acceptable level of accessibility and standard of provision that is at least equal to the existing facility. Policy DMC1 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*) also supports provision of new community facilities, if these are located within the community or catchment that they are intended to serve and are accommodated within inclusive, accessible, flexible spaces that meet design standards to meet the needs of intended occupants.
- 7.6 The proposed change of use of the Middlesex Suite and Registrar’s Office at first and second floor levels from office class E (g) (i) and function/catering space (sui generis) to a public library and museum (Use Class F1), whilst considered a standalone application that should be considered on its own merits, would result in the relocation of the existing public library from its current location at the High Street to the civic complex. The proposed plans have been revised and the F1 floorspace has been uplifted from 1,820.23 sqm to 2,636.33 sqm and would include the provision of a mobile library at first floor and additional community facilities at second floor. These facilities include a public space/museum, a learning centre, study areas and a children’s library. This would ensure that the library services remain accessible for all residents, including adults and children with special needs, in accordance with the above-mentioned requirements set out by policy E4 of the Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) (see *Appendix 3*).
- 7.7 In planning and strategic terms, the change of use would have no detrimental effects on the vitality and viability of the Uxbridge Town Centre, as the proposed siting would not result in a loss of F1 floorspace (learning and non-residential institutions) within the town centre. The application site is still located within the catchment area that is currently served by the present location of the public library, within the town centre. Moreover, the first and second floor levels within the Middlesex Suite are considered underused and are therefore identified as having the potential for introducing new public services. The proposed facilities/services are considered compatible with the civic character of site. It is

also noted that the Registrar's Office would be re-provided/accommodated at first floor level, adjoining the proposed mobile library.

- 7.8 Given the public character of the application site within the Uxbridge Town Centre and considering that the development would bring back into use vacant and redundant floorspace to ultimately intensify the use of the civic complex, the proposed use of the Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office as a public library is supported. The proposal would also complement the existing uses that operate within the civic complex. For reference, other civic uses within the building include the council chamber, council offices and civic suite. Under these terms, the Uxbridge Family Hub and Uxbridge Adult Education Centre have also been relocated to the Civic Centre and the proposed change of use would consolidate the renovation of the civic complex, providing a one-stop visit for residents to upgraded community facilities.
- 7.9 In addition, the proposed refurbishment works at second floor level to upgrade the reception area and create new community spaces that would link the council services with the proposed public library is welcomed (*see Figure 3 above*). In the absence of a reduction of services within the catchment of the town centre, particularly as the mobile library would continue to provide services for people with special needs within the wider setting of the civic centre, the proposed operational requirements of the public library would not be compromised as a result of the proposed change of use of the Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office.
- 7.10 As such, it is considered that the proposed public library and internal public space/museum would complement the public character of the square that opens to the Uxbridge High Street. The proposed community facilities would be accessed via the enclosed link across the corporate entrance, reinforcing the vitality and significance of the public square and Grade II Listed Building, in a convenient and accessible location that is well-served by public transport. In the absence of any reduction in library services, particularly as the proposal would incorporate a mobile library that would serve residents that are unable to access the public library within the wider setting of the site, the proposed development raises no objections under a strategic point of view.
- 7.11 Given that the Middlesex Suite is currently vacant and represents an inefficient use of space within the Civic Centre, the principle of development is acceptable. The proposal represents an opportunity to provide a high-quality community facility that optimises the potential of the civic complex in a way that it does not result in a shortfall of existing library services within the town centre. Moreover, the proposed relocation of the Registrar's Office to the first floor would accommodate new meeting rooms, office floorspace and a reception area that would be linked to a main entrance at first floor, with step-free access.
- 7.12 Considering the above, the proposed change of use is supported, and the proposals would be consistent with the objectives of policies GG1, GG2 and SD6 of the London Plan (2021), policies E4 and C12 of the Local Plan: Part 1

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Strategic Policies (2012) and policies DMTC 1 and DMTC 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 Development Management Policies (2020).

Effects on the Fabric and Setting of the Listed Building

- 7.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) states at paragraph 201 that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. Any development proposal should avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 7.14 Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) (*see Appendix 3*) states that development proposals that affect heritage assets and their setting, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their architectural and historic value. Development proposals should identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations in the design process.
- 7.15 Policy HE1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (*see Appendix 3*) seeks to conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, which includes statutorily Listed Buildings and encourages the reuse and modification of heritage assets. In addition, policy DMHB 1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (*see Appendix 3*) resists any harm to the historic environment. This is considered alongside policy DMHB 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (*see Appendix 3*), which sets out how applications that involve a change of use of a statutorily Listed Building will only be permitted if they retain its significance and value and are appropriate in terms of fabric, historic integrity, spatial quality and layout.
- 7.16 A Design, Access, and Heritage Statement (Revision G dated April 2024) and a separate Heritage Statement (revised June 2024) have been reviewed and give special weight to the impact that the proposed modifications to the internal layout would have on the heritage assets and significance of the Listed Building. On balance, the proposed internal works are regarded as a positive heritage contribution to the Grade II Listed Building, by virtue that the use would be returned to its original function in a way that would improve circulation and legibility around the civic complex.
- 7.17 The building was designed in 1967 and was built between 1973 and 1977. The design is based on the 'Arts and Crafts Movement' and is characterised by its prominent pitched tiled roof forms, which reflect an emphasis in creating new civic buildings of the later post-war period. The architectural assets are also defined by the brickwork detail and hard landscaping, which add to its historic value, by virtue that the building is one of the first major works by a Modernist architect that marks a new architectural language for civic architecture. As such, the covered walkways at ground level, which are accessible from the open square to the front (paved in brick and concrete slab) form part of the civic ensemble and public character of the building.

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- 7.18 The Middlesex Suite is positioned at the south side of the building complex and was fitted as the 'Middlesex Suite' in 1978. This part of the building was originally designed for a clinic on the ground floor and library services at first floor with an open-plan layout. The design of this element of the building complex is defined by its curved staircases and the classical detailing around the side entrance, which fronts a courtyard. This side entrance was once the main entrance to the building.
- 7.19 Whilst it is recognised that the heritage listing does not include the interior of the building, the proposed works to the internal building fabric seek to reinstate the original function and plan form of the internal spaces, in order to facilitate the proposed change of use. The internal works would comprise the following minor alterations:
- Reinstatement of the original openings and form open spaces to allow greater visibility across the first and second floor levels.
 - Changes to internal layout to accommodate a security desk, reception area, seating areas, an information point, an enclosed children's library, book shelving areas, hireable meeting rooms, a learning centre, study booths and staff room/office together with internal changes to the first-floor layout to accommodate a mobile library.
 - Refurbishment works to reinstate the original central high ceilings at second floor level by the removal of low-level suspended ceilings and re-provision of upper window features.
 - Replacement of internal doors along the access route, so these are power assisted to aid accessibility.
- 7.20 Notwithstanding the fact that the proposed change of use involves internal alterations to the Listed Building (which is not part of the listing), the application is assessed together with an application for listed building consent (ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410). This application for listed building consent involves the installation of glazing to fully enclose the covered walkway between the Corporate Entrance and the Middlesex Suite to create an internal link. Therefore, the impact on the historic fabric of the building needs to be assessed. Similarly, the application for listed building consent involves the installation of a new signage, to address concerns raised in connection to legibility and accessibility to the proposed public library.
- 7.21 The alterations to create the link are considered modest, and these would ultimately seek to upgrade accessibility to the Listed Building, by creating a more welcoming reception area for visitors. The works would have no effects on the solid/void relationship between walls and glazing and would ensure the retention of sufficient daylight penetration to the building. In the absence of changes to the original plan form or removal of original features of the Listed Building, the proposed glazing and enclosures would be on balance positive, as these would aim to deliver a more welcoming and secured covered entrance to the Middlesex Suite. Moreover, the proposed bronze signage with individual lettering for "Uxbridge Library & Museum" that would be mounted on the existing brick

parapet, would be sympathetic to the listed façade of the building. These works and the associated signage are considered in more detail in the assessment of the associated application for listed building consent (ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410).

- 7.22 Following the comments from the Council’s Design and Conservation Officer, which state that the works “would bring the structure back into use, bringing it more closely to its original layout and returning it to its designed use”, the proposed internal works are supported, as these would respect the significance of the Listed Building by reinstating its original function and plan form. Under these terms, Design and Conservation Officers welcome the proposed internal works, particularly as these involve opening the high-level windows and exposing the columns, which would benefit the space in terms of character, illumination, and detailing.
- 7.23 For the above reasons, the development would preserve and enhance the significance and fabric of the Listed Building, the application would accord with policies HC1 of the London Plan (2021), policy HE1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 (2020) and policies DMHB 1 and DMHB 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 (2020).

Quality of Proposed F1 Floorspace for a Public Library

- 7.24 London Plan Policy D4 (2021) (see *Appendix 3*) seeks to scrutinise the qualitative aspects of a development in terms of spatial quality and standards. These requirements are assessed together with policy S1 of the London Plan (2021) (see *Appendix 3*), which seeks high-quality and inclusive social infrastructure facilities, such as public libraries. Given the public character of the proposed change of use, careful consideration should be given to the proposed layout, outlook, comfort, lighting, and accessibility of the internal spaces to ensure that the proposed F1 floorspace accommodation is adequate and co-exists with the existing functions of the civic centre in a welcoming and attractive manner.
- 7.25 Policy DMHB 11 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*) provides further design considerations, including works that are applicable to internal alterations, to ensure that the design and layout maximises the capacity of a building and remains adaptable to different activities. The policy seeks to protect features of positive value, particularly heritage assets.
- 7.26 The proposed entrances have been designed to ensure that the services are accessible through different sections of the building. The public spaces would be accessible at first and second floors and would be also linked to the council offices through improved circulation spaces and meeting rooms.
- 7.27 With regards to capacity, the proposed library would contain 2,636.33 sqm of internal floorspace, which would include a public space/museum, study desk areas, circulation areas, meeting rooms, shelving areas, a children’s library and learning centre areas. The revised proposal uplifts the quantum of F1 floorspace,

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following concerns raised during the first consultation exercise. The revised floor space accommodates that of the existing Registrar's Office, merging this with the proposed public library, to ensure that the library remains the largest public library within the Borough and accommodates a range of community services for different users.

- 7.28 Moreover, the proposed floorspace should not only be assessed in terms of size, but the internal layout should be reviewed with regards to quality, particularly in terms of layout, circulation, visual outlook and illumination. In this instance, the space would be mainly distributed within one single floor at second floor level (the Registrar's Office services are proposed on first floor level) and there would be no stepped access between the different spaces of the public library. The floorplan would therefore be convenient and legible for library users and would benefit from natural sunlight and daylight, by reason that the spaces would be opened and the original high-level Crittall windows would be restored.
- 7.29 In light of the refurbishment works which seek to restore the original character of the spaces with good levels of illumination and visual outlook and considering the open-plan layout approach for convenient use, the proposal raises no concerns in terms of internal configuration.

Inclusive Design and Accessibility

- 7.30 With regards to inclusive design and disabled access, step-free access would be provided at second floor level through the existing ramps. As an alternative, disabled access would also be provided at first floor level, in a way that access is linked to the staff entrance and mobile library. Additionally, disabled access would be provided through the forecourt via a ramped access route to the covered walkway. The level access route would include an internal lift between both step-free access points. The facilities would therefore provide adequate accessibility arrangements for disabled, less mobile, and elderly residents by providing step-free access, ultimately improving the existing connections within the building.
- 7.31 Although concerns have been raised in the public consultation over the gradient of the existing ramps, these have been assessed in detail by the Council's Access Officer. Following revisions and subject to conditions, the Access Officer raises no objections to the proposed means of disabled access to the site, considering that these also respond to the physical constraints of the Grade II Listed Building. The entrances would be designed to meet the requirements of Part M4 (3) with clear opening widths to allow sufficient turning space within entrance areas.

Summary

- 7.32 Given the concept for an open plan layout, as the internal works would reinstate the previously blocked areas and original opening features of the building, the proposed internal design is acceptable. The open-plan concept would facilitate community engagement but would also adapt to other uses in a functional

manner, considering that ancillary spaces such as the learning centre, study booths, museum, an exhibition room, and a children's library would be linked to the reception space. This would result in an acceptable and welcoming public internal environment.

- 7.33 Whilst the public library would provide step-free access and would meet modern accessibility requirements, the legibility between the covered entrance and the public square should be prioritised, in accordance with comments given by the Council's Access Officer. The public library should also be perceived as a point of reference from the public square and by the local community and should therefore respond to the layout and original plan form of the civic centre. Furthermore, the public library should be integrated to other services that the civic complex provides. As such, a condition that requires the submission of a Wayfinding Strategy is recommended (see Appendix 1), to assess details of all routes and approaches and ensure that these are clear, inviting and illuminated. The associated application for listed building consent (ref. 14805/APP/2024/1410) includes the installation of signage to ensure that the public library is perceived as a point of reference within its setting.
- 7.34 Due to the above considerations, the quality of the proposed public library space within the Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office raises no concerns in terms of size, layout, and accessibility. The proposed public library would reinstate the civic character of the site and would be compatible with the range of services that operate within the civic complex, in a way that the connections within the building would be improved. The development would therefore be consistent with policy D4 of the London Plan (2021) and policy DMHB 11 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see Appendix 3) in that it would provide a positive contribution to social infrastructure within the Town Centre in a well-designed, inclusive, and safe environment.

Impact on Amenity

- 7.35 Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021) (see Appendix 3) states that development proposals should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings. At a local level, policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012) (see Appendix 3) states that all new development should seek to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties. This requirement is consistent with policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Development Management Policies (2020) (see Appendix 3), which seeks to avoid any adverse impact on amenity of adjacent properties and open space.
- 7.36 Given the nature of the proposed development involving a change of use with limited alterations to the building, the application would not raise concerns over harmful effects on the amenity of neighbouring properties with regards to sunlight/daylight, privacy or visual outlook provided to neighbouring residents. The Middlesex Suite and the Registrar's Office are located at the southeast side of the Civic Centre and retain a significant distance from residential properties within the wider context of the site. As such, the development would have no

adverse impact on amenity and no objections have been received raising concerns with regards to harm on residential or visual amenity. The change of use is therefore acceptable on amenity terms and would be consistent with policy D6 of the London Plan (2021), policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) and policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*).

Highways and Transport

- 7.37 Policy T1 of the London Plan (2021) (see *Appendix 3*) states that development proposals should support the delivery of the mayor's strategic target of 80% of all trips in London to be made by foot, cycle, and public transport by 2041. Policy T1 requires developments to make the most effective use of land, in a way that reflects its connectivity and accessibility by existing and future transport links, walking and cycling routes to ensure that any impact on the London's transport networks and supporting infrastructure is mitigated. Furthermore, policy S1 of the London Plan (2021) (see *Appendix 3*) supports social infrastructure when sites are easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking. These should be encouraged in high streets and town centres.
- 7.38 At a local level, policy T1 of the Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) (see *Appendix 3*) seeks to reduce the impact of development on the transport network by steering it towards appropriate locations, as development proposals should encourage access by sustainable modes of transport and include the provision of good cycling and walking means of access. In addition, policy DMT 1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see *Appendix 3*) requires proposals to be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling from the catchment area that it's likely to draw its employees from, including customers and visitors. The policy seeks for safe, convenient, and inclusive environments, including adequate provision of access for disabled people.
- 7.39 The proposed public library would continue to occupy a prominent position within the Uxbridge Town Centre and given the absence of external alterations to the building, the current access arrangements to the site would remain as existing. However, initial concerns raised with regards to the absence of disabled parking for the new facilities have been noted. The revised application proposes to secure the allocation of three blue badge parking bays on Level 2 for library users, within a maximum of approximately 50 metres level-access distance from the main entrance to the proposed public library. Four blue badge parking spaces are proposed on Level 1 for users of the relocated Registrar's Office, within proximity and with level access. An internal lift is proposed to enable step-free access between the facilities on each of the two floors.

Active Travel Arrangements:

- 7.40 The Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office are located at a short walking distance (approximately 5 minutes) from Uxbridge Station. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 4 to 5, which is considered 'good'. The proposed introduction of the public library within the site involves the relocation

of the existing library, which sits at 22 High Street Uxbridge, at approximately 300 metres from the application site (three to five minutes' walk). Due to the limited distance, the proposed location would remain accessible and served by the same range of public transport options as existing, while serving the same catchment within the Uxbridge Town Centre.

- 7.41 The Civic Centre also fronts a bus stop (Stop U) and is located at a short distance from a number of bus stops along Hillingdon Road and Vine Street towards the east and west sides. There are up to 26 buses per hour stopping within a walking distance of the site, which are connected to various destinations, such as Hillingdon Hill, Hayes, Southall, and Ealing. Overall, the site sits within a sustainable location and the introduction of a public library within the Civic Centre would still reduce the need to travel by car and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, in accordance with the aspirations set out by policy T1 of the Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) (see *Appendix 3*).
- 7.42 Pedestrians would access the library via the Civic Centre through stepped or ramped step-free walking routes onto the second-floor level, from Uxbridge High Street. The means of disabled access have been reviewed in detail by the Council's Access Officer, who raised no concerns with regards to the proposed routes across the High Street, which would lead through a covered colonnade to access an internal lift. An alternative step-free access route would also be delivered at first floor level, across an internal lift that adjoins the proposed mobile library at first floor. Whilst concerns were raised on the existing gradient of the ramps, these form part of the fabric of the Grade II Listed Building and are considered duly appropriate, as advised by the Council's Access Officer.
- 7.43 The site also benefits from an extensive network of cycle routes and there is existing cycle parking within the curtilage of the civic complex, which can be used by staff and visitors.

Parking:

- 7.44 The Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office, as existing, have no dedicated car parking. However, the introduction of new F1 floorspace to accommodate a new public library within the Civic Centre is assessed against car parking requirements set out by policy T6 of the London Plan (2021) (see *Appendix 3*). As such and as stated above, three blue badge holder parking bays (an additional four for the relocated Registrar's Office) would be allocated to library users by road markings on the existing car parking area at the east side of the site, with direct access from the High Street and within 50 metres from the proposed public library (see *Figure 7 below*). This allocation raises no concerns in terms of the impact on the existing car parking area within the Civic Centre, as these are currently underutilised. The Highways and Transport Officer therefore raises no objections and accepts the quantum of allocated blue badge parking bays for library users.

Figure 7: Proposed Parking Layout Level 2 - (please note- larger vision of plans can be found in the Committee Plan Pack)

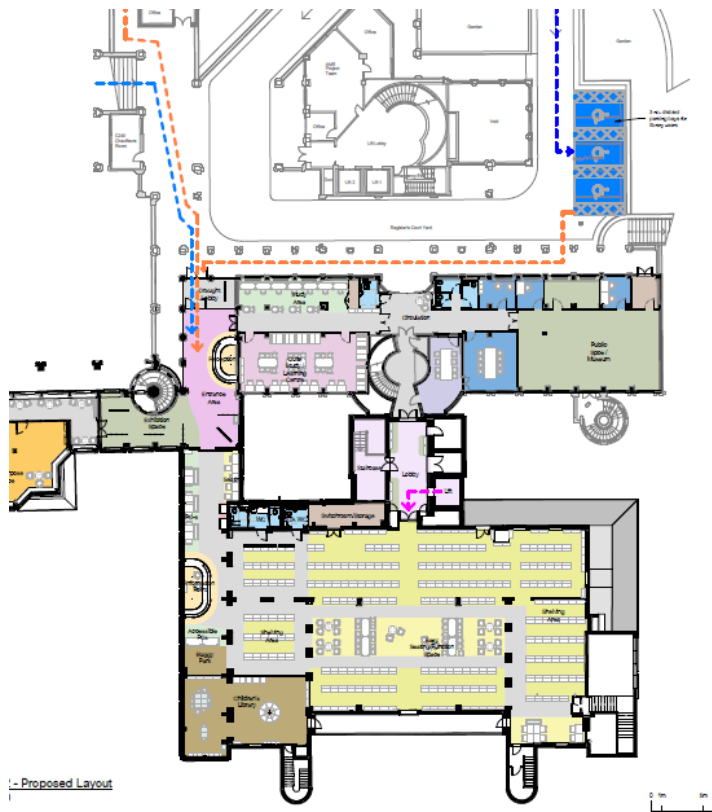
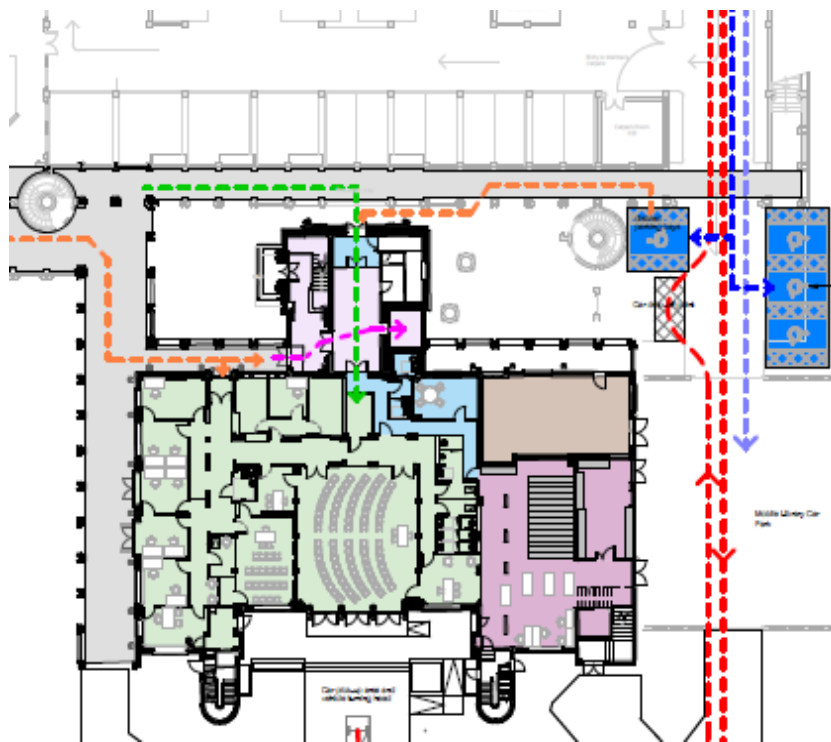


Figure 8: Proposed Parking Layout Level 1 - (please note- larger vision of plans can be found in the Committee Plan Pack)



- 7.45 Step-free access routes would be provided from the blue badge parking spaces to the respective proposed services on Levels 1 and 2. The provision of blue badge car parking is therefore welcomed, as it responds to the parking requirements set out by the London Plan for non-residential floorspace. Details in connection to management and control of these parking bays would be secured by condition requiring the submission of a Car Parking Management Plan, to ensure that these are used by blue badge library users only. In addition, a condition requiring details of dual active electric vehicle charging points has been requested by the Highways Authority, which is also therefore recommended.
- 7.46 Notwithstanding the provision of three blue badge parking bays within the Civic Centre for disabled library visitors, other visitors could also use existing parking arrangements and access the publicly accessible town centre multi-storey car park (The Chimes). Additionally, members of staff (maximum number of eight that would be on-site at any time) who hold a blue badge could also apply for disabled parking at the Civic Centre Car Park. The provision of dedicated disabled car parking is therefore welcomed, particularly as there are no parking arrangements on the existing public library at 22 High Street.
- 7.47 Cycle parking would be provided within the curtilage of the Civic Centre, which would be used for staff and visitors. In addition, Sheffield stands are available along the High Street and throughout the town centre. Under these terms, the provision of additional cycle parking within the building is not required.

Servicing and Refuse:

- 7.48 The proposed change of use would have no effects on the existing servicing and delivery arrangements of the Civic Centre, as the public library and mobile library would use the designated service yard, which is adjacent to the Middlesex Suite towards the east side of the site. Given the small number of deliveries that would result from the development, these would be distributed by hand across the circulation routes.
- 7.49 Although the proposed deliveries and collections in connection to the mobile library would involve additional movements within the site, these deliveries would not constitute new trips on the transport networks, as these are already in operation from the existing public library. These include three types of trips and vehicles, which would comprise the following: one van for library deliveries and collections (3 – 4 trips per week); one van for home library service (3 trips per week); and one van for redistribution of books and materials across the borough (1 trip per week).
- 7.50 With regards to waste, the proposed library would use the existing arrangements that are in place in the Civic Centre and would not involve an uplift in refuse collection. Waste collection would be managed by staff, in a similar way as the existing public library operates at 22 High Street Uxbridge. The Highways Authority accepts these arrangements.

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Trip Generation:

- 7.51 The proposed library is expected to employ a maximum of eight staff on site at any one time, resulting in sixteen two-way trips per day. Notwithstanding the limited number of trips per day by reason of the limited number of staff, it is noted that the development would have no impact on travel, as movements to and from the Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office would be simply a transferal and the existing staff will likely travel in the same method as existing staff within the current facilities at 22 High Street. Under these terms, no trip generation for visitors was assessed as part of the revised Transport Statement (dated 3rd June 2024), by reason that the change of use involves a relocation from an existing site that is positioned at 300 metres from the application site. There are therefore no new trips generated by the proposed development.
- 7.52 In light of the above considerations, the proposed change of use raises no concerns in terms of transport and highways. The site benefits from good transport options and the development involves transferring the library functions from an existing site that is at a close distance of approximately 300 metres. The development therefore would have no effect on trip generation within the locality. The provision of three blue badge holder parking bays for library users within the existing underutilised car parking area at the east side of the building is welcomed, as these would ultimately enhance the arrangements of the current library. The development is therefore consistent with policies T1 and SI7 of the London Plan (2021) and policies DMT 1 and DMT 6 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (*see Appendix 3*).

Noise Impacts

- 7.53 Policy D14 of the London Plan (2021) requires mitigation measures on existing and potential adverse impacts in terms of noise and disturbance, as a result of new development proposals. This policy seeks to enhance the acoustic environment of a site and minimise any adverse impact of noise through sensitive design, management, and operation.
- 7.54 Given the nature of the development for the reprovision of the public library within the Civic Centre, a Noise Impact Assessment was not required in this instance, as the development would only involve a change of use and no specifications for assessing the external building fabric and measures for noise control were considered applicable. Nevertheless, in the absence of residential environments within the immediate context of the site, no concerns are raised with regards to new and existing receptors.
- 7.55 In terms of the proposed opening hours, these would be consistent with the current opening hours that operate within the existing public library at the High Street, which are as follows:

- Monday to Thursday – 9:00AM to 19:00PM
- Friday to Saturday – 9:00AM to 17:00PM

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- Sundays – 10:00AM to 13:00PM and closed on bank holidays.

The above opening hours are recommended by condition, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of noise and disturbance mitigation.

Contamination

- 7.56 Policy DMEI 12 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see Appendix 3) is applicable for development proposals on potentially contaminated sites and requires remediation measures in respect to contamination to deliver developments that are suitable for their proposed use. The site is considered to have a low likelihood of contaminants or ground gases and the change of use does not involve the introduction of residential floorspace. Moreover, given the fact that the application only involves refurbishment works and minor internal alterations to the Listed Building, further details in connection to contaminated land are not required in this instance.

Flooding

- 7.57 Policy SI12 of the London Plan (2021) requires development proposals to minimise any flood risk and introduce mitigation measures if required. The Civic Centre is within a Flood Zone 1 and has low risk from sources of flooding. In the absence of development works within areas that are identified as being potentially at risk of flooding and considering that the application does not include any significant external works to the Listed Building, the application does not require a site wide drainage strategy. Any impact from the proposed internal works is considered negligible within the context of the Civic Centre. There are therefore no conditions recommended with reference to flooding and the development is consistent with policy SI12 of the London Plan (2021) (see Appendix 3).

Ecology

- 7.58 London Plan Policy G6 (2021) (see Appendix 3) states that development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. The policy seeks for development proposals to incorporate measures that support species and habitats with appropriate landscaping strategies.
- 7.59 Notwithstanding the above requirements, the Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office are entirely built over and the proposed public library would not include areas of soft landscaping or trees. Given the nature of the application for a change of use and the fact that the F1 floorspace would be entirely enclosed, there would be no soft planting or trees that would be impacted by the proposed development. As such, no conditions to provide details of planting and landscaping are recommended.

Sustainability

- 7.60 Policy DME1 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see Appendix 3) requires all developments to make the fullest contribution to minimise carbon dioxide emissions.
- 7.61 No Energy Statement is required to support the application as the proposal is not a major development, considering that it does not involve the creation of new floorspace, and the site is less than 1 hectare in area. Nevertheless, the proposed change of use forms part of a comprehensive approach to accommodate several public services within the civic complex, resulting in greater energy efficiency.
- 7.62 In this case, it is worth noting that the current public library along the High Street does not have the space to accommodate the size of an air heat source pump and the current boilers are too new to attract government grants for decarbonisation. The Civic Centre has received government funding from the ‘Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund’ to decarbonise and the proposed internal works to accommodate new services within the Middlesex Suite would implement the secured funding to reduce emissions and make the building complex carbon neutral. Due to these considerations, the proposed change of use would be consistent with the above aspirations, as set out by policy DME1 2 of the Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020) (see Appendix 3).

Fire Safety

- 7.63 Policy D12 of the London Plan (2021) (see Appendix 3) requires all development proposals to achieve the highest standards of fire safety. A condition has been included requiring the submission of a fire safety strategy that includes, but is not limited to, an evacuation plan and means of escape (see Appendix 1).

Safety and Security

- 7.64 Policy D11 of the London Plan (2021) sets out policy requirements that ensure all new forms of development incorporate acceptable levels of safety and security measures. As noted, the proposed opening hours would be consistent with the current opening hours that operate within the existing public library at the High Street, which are stated in paragraph 7.55. Whilst it is recognised that the current Middlesex Suite is underused, the introduction of a public library and Registrar’s Office (on the currently vacant floor space at Level 1), would reinforce passive surveillance within the civic complex. Therefore, the proposal raises no significant concerns with potential anti-social behaviour.

8 Other Matters

Human Rights

- 8.1 The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests/the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Equality

- 8.2 Due consideration has been given to Section 149 of the Equality Act regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty in the assessment of this planning application. No adverse equality impacts are considered to arise from the proposal.

Local Finance Considerations and CIL

- 8.3 Local finance considerations are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Local finance considerations can include either a grant that has been or would be given to the Council from central government or money that the Council has received or will or could receive in terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 8.4 The Civic Centre has received government funding from the 'Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund' to decarbonise and the proposed internal works to accommodate new services within the Middlesex Suite would in part, implement the secured funding to reduce emissions and make the building complex carbon neutral.
- 8.5 The proposed development is not CIL liable.

9 Conclusion/Planning Balance

- 9.1 The principle of development is acceptable and consistent with local and regional policies. The proposed change of use to accommodate a public library within the Civic Centre would be compatible with the civic character of the site and the development would not represent a shortfall of community infrastructure (F1 Use Class) within the town centre.
- 9.2 The proposed location of the public library within the civic complex would seek to consolidate council services within the civic offices. This would ultimately reinforce the significance of the public square and Grade II Listed Building, by bringing back redundant floorspace to active use in an accessible way across the corporate entrance to the site.

- 9.3 The proposed works to the Grade II Listed Building are welcomed, by virtue that these would reinstate the original open-plan layout and function of the Middlesex Suite as a public library. In addition, the works would upgrade the internal condition of the building, by re-instating original openings and visual features, such as the high ceilings, columns and top roof features at second floor level.
- 9.4 Overall, the quality of the F1 floorspace as a public library is acceptable. The space would contain an adequate layout with step-free access within a good internal environment that would benefit from good visual outlook and provision of natural sunlight/daylight. Furthermore, the development raises no concerns in terms of impact on amenity to neighbouring properties.
- 9.5 The development would have no impact on highway safety and would not affect the public realm or safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Suitable cycle parking and disabled parking facilities are/would be provided on site, which would be in proportion with the scale and location of the development.
- 9.6 Overall, it is considered that this committee report provides a comprehensive assessment of the planning application. All material planning considerations have been considered, including responses to consultation. Although concerns over the proposed change of use are noted, it is considered that there are no material planning considerations in this instance that would warrant a refusal. The conditions set out in Appendix 1 would ensure that any adverse impact of the scheme is mitigated against. As such, Officers are satisfied that the development would be acceptable and would ultimately deliver benefits under planning terms.

10 Background Papers

- 10.1 Relevant published policies and documents considered in respect of this application are set out in the report. Documents associated with the application (except exempt or confidential information) are available on the [Council's website here](#), by entering the planning application number at the top of this report and using the search facility. Planning applications are also available to inspect electronically at the Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW upon appointment, by contacting Planning Services at planning@hillington.gov.uk.

APPENDICES

Planning Application

14805/APP/2024/956

Appendix 1: Recommended Conditions and Informatives

Conditions

1. RES3 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. RES4 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 numbered:

M9556-HUN-APLO001 (Rev. B) Site Location Plan
M9556-APL0005 (Rev. B) Site Plan
M9556-APL0006 (Rev. E) Level 1 - Proposed Floor Plan
M9556-HUN-APL0007 (Rev. D) Level 2 - Entrance Proposed Floor Plan
M9556-HUN-APL0008 (Rev. D) Level 2 - Library Proposed Plan
M9556-HUN-APL0009 (Rev. E) Level 1 - Access Plan
M9556-APL0010 (Rev. E) Level 2 - Access Plan
M9556-HUN-APL004 (Rev. C) Context Plan and Proposed Signage

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 the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (2012), Part 2 (2020) and the London Plan (2021).

3. NONSC Wayfinding Strategy (details)

Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a wayfinding strategy with details of signage and access routes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the development.

REASON

To ensure the safe and accessible movement of pedestrians and cyclists through easily identifiable routes, in the interest of providing a safe, well-connected and inclusive environment in accordance with policy DMHB 11 of the Local Plan: Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) and policy D8 of the London Plan (2021).

4. NONSC Fire Safety Statement (details)

Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a Fire Safety Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall include the following:

- 1) Identify suitably positioned unobstructed outside space:
 - a) for fire appliances to be positioned on.
 - b) appropriate for use as an evacuation assembly point.
- 2) Incorporate appropriate features which reduce the risk to life and the risk of serious injury in the event of a fire; including appropriate fire alarm systems and passive and active fire safety measures.
- 3) Demonstrate provision of suitable and convenient means of escape, and associated evacuation strategy for all building users.
- 5) A strategy for evacuation which can be periodically updated and published, and which all building users can have confidence in.
- 6) Demonstrate suitable access and equipment for firefighting which is appropriate for the size and use of the development.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON

In the interest of fire safety and to ensure the safety of all building users in line with Policy D12 of the London Plan (2021).

5. H6 Car Parking Design and Management Plan (details)

Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a Parking Design and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the approved arrangements have been implemented. These shall be retained as such thereafter.

REASON

To ensure that adequate facilities are provided for blue-badge holders and effectively designed and managed, in accordance with Policy T6 of the London Plan (2021).

6. NONSC Electric Vehicle Charging Points (details)

Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of the provision of dual active electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the approved electric vehicle charging points have been implemented. These shall be retained as such thereafter.

REASON

To support carbon-free travel and more sustainable modes of transport, in accordance with Policy T6 of the London Plan (2021).

7. NONSC Accessible Design of Fixtures and Fittings (details)

Prior to first occupation of the public library hereby approved, details of the internal fixtures and fittings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to ensure an inclusive design approach to ensure access for all. The approved details shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the public library, and retained thereafter.

REASON

To ensure an inclusive design approach to the built environment that enables access to opportunities for all, in accordance with Policy D5 of the London Plan (2021).

8. NONSC Automated Doors on Step-Free Access Routes (details)

Prior to first occupation of the development approved, details to demonstrate that the doors on the step-free routes will be automated shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the development, and retained thereafter.

REASON

To ensure an inclusive design approach to the built environment that enables access to opportunities for all, in accordance with Policy D5 of the London Plan (2021) and to safeguard the special architectural and/or historic interest of the building in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (2012), Policies DMHB 1 and DMHB 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020), Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

9. COM22 Operating Hours

The public library and museum hereby approved shall not be open to the public outside of the following hours:

- 9:00 AM and 19:00 PM on Mondays to Thursdays
- 9:00 AM to 17:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays
- 10:00 AM to 13:00 PM on Sundays with no opening hours on Bank Holidays.

REASON

To safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining and nearby properties in accordance with policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020).

10. NONSC Restriction of Use

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order), the F1 Use Class floorspace hereby approved, shall only be used for the purposes stated within this application and not for any other F1 Use Class, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON

To protect the amenity of adjoining properties and the surrounding area in accordance with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies (2012) and Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021).

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. I70 **LBH worked applicant in a positive & proactive (Granting)**

In dealing with the application the Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies from Local Plan Part 1, Local Plan Part 2, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.

3.

The Equality Act 2010 seeks to protect people accessing goods, facilities and services from discrimination on the basis of a 'protected characteristic', which includes those with a disability. As part of the Act, service providers are obliged to improve access to and within the structure of their building, particularly in situations where reasonable adjustment can be incorporated with relative ease. The Act states that service providers should think ahead to take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people.

4.

Please be advised that in the interests of safeguarding the special architectural and historic interest of the building, it is strongly recommended that the interior paint colour scheme and internal details to match existing remaining historic features is discussed and agreed with the Council's Conservation and Design Officers.

Appendix 2: Relevant Planning History

14805/APP/2003/1617 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF MEZZANINE CAR PARK TO COUNCIL OFFICES

Decision: 29-10-2003 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/2023/3254 Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge

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.

Decision: 15-02-2024 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.

Decision: 15-02-2024 Approved

14805/PRC/2023/59

Civic Centre Middlesex Suite High Street Uxbridge

Proposed installation of platform lift, and enclosing of 2 windows as part of the Civic transformation in the Middlesex Suite

Appendix 3: List of Relevant Planning Policies

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

Part 1 Policies:

PT1.BE1	(2012) Built Environment
PT1.CI1	(2012) Community Infrastructure Provision
PT1.E4	(2012) Uxbridge
PT1.E5	(2012) Town and Local Centres
PT1.HE1	(2012) Heritage

Part 2 Policies:

DMEI 12	Development of Land Affected by Contamination
DMHB 1	Heritage Assets
DMHB 11	Design of New Development
DMHB 15	Planning for Safer Places
DMHB 2	Listed Buildings
DMTC 1	Town Centre Development
DMTC 4	Amenity and Town Centre Uses
LPP D12	(2021) Fire safety
LPP D3	(2021) Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
LPP D4	(2021) Delivering good design
LPP D5	(2021) Inclusive design
LPP G6	(2021) Biodiversity and access to nature
LPP GG1	(2021) Building strong and inclusive communities
LPP GG2	(2021) Making the best use of land

LPP HC1	(2021) Heritage conservation and growth
LPP S1	(2021) Developing London's social infrastructure
LPP SD6	(2021) Town centres and high streets
LPP SD7	(2021) Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents
LPP SI12	(2021) Flood risk management
LPP D8	(2021) Public realm