

Committee: **Regulatory  
Planning Committee**

Date: **10 February 2016**

Report by: **Head of Planning and Environment**

Proposal: **Alterations and refurbishment of Hastings Central  
Library.**

Site Address: **Hastings Central Library, 13 Claremont, Hastings**

Applicant: **Assistant Director (Communities), Communities,  
Economy and Transport Department**

Application No. **HS/3301/CCLB**

Key Issue: **Impact on the character and historic interest of the  
listed building**

Contact Officer: **David Vickers, Tel. 01273 481629**

Local Member: **Councillor Godfrey Daniel**

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#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**(1) Provided no objections are received from one or more of the National Amenity Societies by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, to grant listed building consent subject to conditions as indicated in paragraph 8.1 of this report**

**(2) If an objection is received from one or more of the National Amenity Societies by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, to recommend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to grant listed building consent subject to the conditions along the lines of those indicated in paragraph 8.1 of this report.**

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#### **CONSIDERATION BY THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

##### **1. The Site and Surroundings**

1.1 Hastings Central Library is a Grade II listed four storey building within the Town Centre Conservation Area on the western side of Claremont, a short distance from the seafront. Originally built for Thomas Brassey (1878-1881) as a multi –purpose building it was presented to the town in 1888 to house a library, museum and Schools of Arts and Science. It has been a public lending library since 1914 and is constructed in a Gothic revival style with Italianate influences, including a balcony at third floor level and a two-storey bay fronted

window. The main entrance is from Claremont through an arched porch located at the ground floor of the stair tower to the left hand side of the principal façade. The tower has a series of windows corresponding with the various landings and is crowned by a steeply-pitched hipped roof with a flat top.

1.2 Claremont forms the western side of the “Trinity Triangle” of roads with Trinity Street and Robertson Street. The area is within a designated Cultural Quarter of White Rock and the America Ground. The surrounding buildings are predominantly three to four storeys in height, although some have five or six storeys.

1.3 The site is within the town centre, with the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre a short distance to the east and Hastings Railway Station some 400 metres to the north. The surrounding roads are characterised by a typical town centre mix of shops, cafes and other related uses at ground floor level, with residential above.

## **2. The Proposal**

2.1 It is proposed to refurbish the building and bring the library and Children’s Library, currently in Robertson Passage, together under one roof. This application is for Listed Building Consent and this report will therefore focus on elements of the proposal that would directly affect the internal and external fabric of the listed building. A full planning application, HS/3302/CC, for the refurbishment of the building has recently been granted.

2.2 Over the years the building has been subject to numerous internal alterations due to changing demands. Many of these interventions, no doubt considered necessary at the time have, individually and cumulatively, been detrimental to the character and appearance of the building and in some cases have resulted in the removal or damage to original features of interest.

2.3 The underlying principles are to rationalise the accommodation. Currently, public areas are confined to the ground and first floors with the remaining three floors devoted to back office facilities. The proposals are to concentrate these administrative services in the basement opening up the remainder of the building to public library use. In so doing, the aim, as far as possible, is to strip out unsympathetic alterations and at the same time reveal, repair or refurbish more of the original features and layout with new elements to be as sympathetic as possible.

## **3. Relevant Site History**

3.1 HS/3302/CC – Granted – 2016. Alterations and refurbishment of Hastings Central Library

3.2 HS/3122/CCNM/1 – Granted – 2015. Non Material Amendments to planning permission HS/3122/CC

3.3 HS/3121/CCLB/1 – Granted – 2015. Refurbishment to Hastings Central Library, including extension into and change of use of No.12 Claremont. The combined building to incorporate the current Library, Children's Library and Hastings Registration Services. The proposal includes constructing a mansard roof and terrace at third floor level of No.12.

3.4 HS/3121/CCLB – Granted – 2013. Refurbishment to Hastings Central Library, including extension into and change of use of No.12 Claremont. The combined building to incorporate the current Library, Children's Library and Hastings Registration Services. The proposal includes constructing a mansard roof at third floor level of No.12.

3.5 HS/3122/CC – Granted - 2013 - Refurbishment to Hastings Central Library, including extension into and change of use of No.12 Claremont. The combined building to incorporate the current Library, Children's Library and Hastings Registration Services. The proposal includes constructing a mansard roof and terrace at third floor level of No.12.

#### **4. Consultations and Representations**

4.1 Hastings Borough Council: The Borough Council raises no objections to the proposals subject to various conditions.

4.2 Historic England: This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of expert conservation advice.

4.3 National Amenity Societies (Ancient Monuments Society, Council for British Archaeology, The Georgian Group, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Twentieth Century Society, The Victorian Society): At the time of writing no responses have been received. Any representations received by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 will be reported orally to the Committee meeting.

4.4 Local Representations: None received.

#### **5. The Development Plan and other policies of relevance to this decision are:**

5.1 Hastings Planning Strategy 2011-2028 (adopted February 2014); Policies EN1 (Built and Historic Environment) & FA2 (Strategic Policy for Central Area).

5.2 Development Management Plan, (adopted September 2015); Policies HN1 (Development Affecting the Significance and Setting of Designated Heritage Assets), HN2 (Changing Doors, Windows and Roofs in Conservation Areas) and HN4 (Development affecting Heritage Assets with Archaeological and Historic Interest or Potential Interest).

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework, 2012; The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making but it does constitute guidance as a material consideration in determining planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Chapter 12 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

## **6. Considerations**

### **Impact on the Character and Historic Interest of the Listed Building**

6.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2015 amends previous Regulations to now, under certain circumstances, require that a local planning authority refer their own applications for listed building consent to the Secretary of State only where Historic England or one of the National Amenity Societies objects to the application and requests that the Secretary of State determines it. In other circumstances, the local planning authority will determine the application for listed building consent.

6.2 Policy EN1 in the Hastings Planning Strategy 2011-2028 sets out a presumption in favour of the conservation of heritage assets and their settings and expects particular care to be given to protecting the significance and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas. Policy FA2 sets out a strategy for the Central Area, within which the Library sits, with Policy FA2(k) seeking to protect and enhance architectural heritage, particularly in the conservation areas.

6.3 In the Development Management Plan, Policy HN1 states that permission will be given for schemes that show a full understanding of the significance of the asset and convincingly demonstrate how their chosen design sustains and enhances the significance of any heritage assets affected, including conservation areas. Policy HN2 states that in conservation areas the Council will seek to maintain the form and appearance of original windows, doors and roofs where this contributes to the character of the building and the significance of the wider conservation area. Policy HN4 expects all applications affecting heritage assets with archaeological or historic interest or potential interest to include an appropriate, Historic Environment Record (HER) desk-based assessment and, where necessary, the results of a field evaluation.

6.4 The scheme of works has been informed by an Interpretive Survey and an Impact Assessment in accordance with Policies HN1 and HN4 in the Development Management Plan, whereas the scope of works will be subject to further investigation once on site.

6.5 Many of the infrastructure systems in the building have been added to in an unco-ordinated and less sensitive manner over a number of years and are now coming to the end of their useful lives. The proposed building refurbishment offers an opportunity to re-wire and install new heating and

ventilation systems and at the same time to remove unsightly surface mounted wiring and bulkheads concealing data cabling. Replacement infrastructure services will be concentrated within a single housing running up the entire party wall with the neighbouring building to the south and number 12. Ventilation in the main public areas on ground, first and third floors will shift from the current mechanical approach to a naturally passive system by refurbishing currently stuck closed windows and rooflights. Mechanical ventilation will still be needed on the second floor where the majority of publically available IT facilities are proposed and also in the basement. The existing lift shaft is sound. However, the lift car is outdated and a new car with larger capacity for 10 people is proposed.

6.6 On the lower ground floor / basement there is a warren of small rooms and large amounts of surface mounted cabling and wiring on both walls and ceilings. Short lengths of the original walls (depicted in purple on the supporting layout drawings) are to be removed and the layout altered to better suit staff needs. For example, the welfare facility is to be moved towards the front to take advantage of natural lighting. A staircase towards the rear of the building connecting this floor with the ground floor is to be removed and the original staircase approached from the entrance lobby, will be adapted to reduce its pitch with an over stair. The main plant for the building will be contained in the lower ground floor.

6.7 At the main entrance it is proposed to replace the solid doors from the lobby into the main body of the building with glazed leafs. The purpose is twofold: to improve visibility from the street into the library and to improve thermal performance. Currently these doors are left open to improve visibility but this also lets heat out. The main staircase is one of the most attractive features in the building. However, the treads and landings are worn and show signs of having been repaired but in a less sensitive manner. Wholesale repair is structurally inadvisable as no weight can be added to the staircase so the proposal is to bond thin sheet flooring to the treads, risers and landings to resemble their original stone appearance as far as possible. Further into the ground floor two original door openings off the landing into the library space will be widened and the exiting doors replaced with glazed doors. Public toilet facilities are to be provided in a new enclosure towards the rear of the ground floor and windows concealed behind a large bulkhead will be refurbished when the bulkhead is removed.

6.8 On the first floor, a server room which partially obscures the stone bay window to the front of the building will be removed and the bay restored. At the rear, another bulkhead concealing ventilation ducting and plant will be removed. A central rooflight, original to the building but subsequently removed and the ceiling boarded over, is to be reconstructed partly to increase natural light into what is a large floor area and also as part of the natural ventilation strategy. Windows to the rear will be restored to working order and new units inserted, again as part of the ventilation strategy. They will be controlled by electric actuators.

6.9 The second floor was originally the private apartment of Thomas Brassey. However, it is now used partly for Learn Direct with the remainder for library administration. Proposed arrangements are to retain public computer use on this floor towards the rear with the library to the front. With the concentration of computers on this floor it is not possible to naturally ventilate so mechanical ventilation will be housed in a suspended ceiling which will replace the existing bulkhead. Toilet facilities will be formed at the rear of this floor.

6.10 The third floor was converted early on in the life of the building to an Art School with the rear roof altered to provide large north lights and a long ridge roof light to the roof at the front of the building. The roof lights are not original and are only single glazed and leaking. They will be replaced with modern double glazed equivalents with opening lights on actuators to provide natural ventilation. It is proposed to remove many of the modern partitions which have been added that subdivide these large spaces, opening them up to create bright and airy library spaces. The gallery that runs along two sides of the central lightwell will be refurbished and the original openings into the rear section of the building opened up and fitted with glazed screens to provide views through the lightwell from the rear to the front of the building. Toilets, including a wider access WC, will be formed on this floor in the rear corner, sharing services with those below.

6.11 Overall, these proposals are the least invasive of the three schemes considered since 2013 and in their own right represent an overall enhancement of the building. The proposals are acceptable. Nevertheless, the precise details have yet to be fully worked up and it would be appropriate for suitable conditions to be imposed along the lines suggested by the Borough Council. Subject to this, the proposals would satisfy the aims of Policies FA2(k) and EN1 in the Planning Strategy and Policy HN2 in the Development Management Plan.

## **7. Conclusion and reasons for approval**

7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 Subject to any views received from any of the National Amenity Societies by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, it is considered that the proposal is an overall enhancement of the character and appearance of the listed building. It is also considered that the proposal complies with Policies FA2(k) and EN1 in the Hastings Planning Strategy 2014 and with Policies HN1, HN2 and HN4 in the Development Management Plan 2015.

7.3 In considering this application for listed building consent, the County Council as Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner. The County Council has also sought views from consultees and neighbours and has considered responses in preparing its

recommendation. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirement in the NPPF, and as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

7.4 There are no other material considerations and the decision should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1(i) Provided no objections are received from one or more of the National Amenity Societies by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to grant listed building consent subject to the conditions below:-

(ii) If an objection is received from one or more of the National Amenity Societies by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, to recommend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to consider the application, any representations, and, to grant listed building consent subject to conditions along the lines below.

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed in the Schedule of Approved Plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Prior to materials being used, a detailed schedule of materials and finishes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Council's Head of Planning and Environment. The schedule shall include a breakdown per room and include details of existing materials to be replaced as well as those proposed. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the historic fabric and architectural character and appearance of this listed building.

4. Prior to fitting, details of all new and replacement joinery, including windows, doors, rooflights, stairs, louvres and other alterations shall be submitted to the County Council's Head of Planning and Environment and approved in writing. The approved joinery details shall be used within the development and thereafter retained. Any existing historic glass should be retained and reused in position(s) to be agreed in writing by the Head of Planning and Environment.

Reason: To safeguard the historic fabric and architectural character and appearance of this listed building.

5. The County Council's Head of Planning and Environment shall be notified of any additional structural works identified as being necessary during the course of implementing the works hereby approved. Any variation to the approved details shall be submitted for agreement in writing by the Head of Planning and Environment prior to the works being implemented. The works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the historic fabric and architectural character and appearance of this listed building.

6. Notwithstanding the information provided on the drawings hereby approved, full details of all external lighting including the type, position and specification of fittings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Council's Head of Planning and Environment. External lighting shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the historic fabric and architectural character and appearance of this listed building and in the interests of highway safety.

## INFORMATIVES

1. In relation to Condition 4, joinery details shall be submitted at a scale of 1:10 elevations & 1:2 sections. These details shall include: through cills, heads, frames and opening lights, including glazing bars and mullions, banisters, rails, tread and other decorative elements, showing the relationship to the existing structure.
2. Separate application(s) in accordance with the Advertisement Regulations, may be required for the display of hanging or fascia signage. Applications should be made to Hastings Borough Council.

## Schedule of Approved Plans

Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan 1000-S2, Existing Ground Floor Plan 1001-S2, Existing First Floor Plan 1002-S2 RevA, Existing Second Floor Plan 1003-S2, Existing Third Floor Plan 1004-S2, Site Location & Block Plan 1005-S2, Existing Roof Plan 1006-S2, Lower Ground Floor Plan 1100-S2 RevD, Ground Floor Plan 1101-S2 RevG, First Floor Plan 1102-S2 RevE, Second Floor Plan 1103-S2 RevG, Third Floor Plan 1104-S2 RevF, Roof Plan 1105-S2 RevA, L Ground Floor Plan (Ceilings & Cornices) 1200-S2 RevE, Ground Floor Plan (Ceilings & Cornices) 1201-S2 RevE, First Floor Plan (Ceilings & Cornices) 1202-S2 RevC, Second Floor Plan (Ceilings & Cornices) 1203-S2 RevF, Third Floor Plan (Ceilings & Cornices) 1204-S2 RevD, L Ground Floor Plan (Floor Finishes & Skirtings) 1300-S2 RevD, Ground Floor Plan (Floor Finishes & Skirtings) 1301-S2 RevE, First Floor Plan (Floor Finishes & Skirtings) 1302-S2 RevD, Second Floor Plan (Floor Finishes & Skirtings)



1303-S2 RevE, Third Floor Plan (Floor Finishes & Skirtings) 1304-S2 RevE, L Ground Floor Plan (Wall Finishes) 1400-S2 RevB, Ground Floor Plan (Wall Finishes) 1401-S2 RevD, First Floor Plan (Wall Finishes) 1402-S2 RevA, Second Floor Plan (Wall Finishes) 1403-S2 RevC, Third Floor Plan (Wall Finishes) 1404-S2 RevB, Existing Front East Elevation 2000-S2, Existing Rear West Elevation 2001-S2, Proposed Front East Elevation 2100-S2 RevA, Proposed Rear & Side West & North Elevations 2101-S2 RevF, Proposed GA Section A-A 3100-S2 RevB, Proposed GA Section B-B & C-C 3101-S2 RevB, Proposed GA Section D-D 3102-S2 RevB, Main Stair Plans 4000-S2 RevC, Main Stair Sections 4001-S2 RevC, Lift Plans & Sections & Elevations Proposed 4006-S2 RevA, Lower Ground Floor Staircase Details 4007-S2 RevA, Alterations to Lower Ground Windows Front Side 4100-S2, Alterations to Ground Windows Front Side 1401-S2 RevA, Alterations to First Floor Windows Front Side 4102-S2 RevA, Alterations to Second Floor Windows Front Side 4103-S2 RevA, Alterations to Third Floor Windows Front Side 4104-S2 RevA, Alterations to Rear Elevation Window -GF 4105-S2 RevA, Alterations to Rear Elevation Window -FF 4106-S2 RevA, Alterations to Rear Elevation Window -SF 4107-S2 RevA, Alterations to Lightwell Windows -01 4108-S2 RevA, Alterations to Lightwell Windows -02 4109-S2 RevA, Alterations to Lightwell Windows -03 4110-S2 RevA, New North Lights 4111-S2 RevA, Alterations to Rooflights - Third Floor 4112-S2 RevA, Proposed Lightwell elevations 4113 RevB, Proposed Skylight - RF.01 4114 RevA, Alterations to Staircase doors and screens (1of2) 4120-S2 RevA, Alterations to Staircase doors and screens (2of2) 4121-S2 RevB, Second Floor Screen (Existing) 4122-S2 RevA, Second Floor Screen (Proposed) 4123-S2, Existing Front Elevation Basement Grille 4124-S2, Proposed Front Elevation Basement Grille 4125-S2, Third Floor Gallery Detail 4126-S2 RevA, Parapet Coping Details 4127-S2, Rear Elevation Escape Stair Lighting Installation HLI-ELE-LTG-E303 P2, Lower Ground Floor Layout of Openings in Historic Walls for Mech Services HLI-LGF-BW-M601 P5

TONY COOK  
HEAD OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT  
2 February 2016

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Application File  
Development Plan  
National Planning Policy Framework