

Committee: **Regulatory
Planning Committee**

Date: **11 October 2017**

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

Proposal: **Listed Building Consent to adapt existing rainwater drainage to front elevation and add new protective panels to rear ground floor windows**

Site Address: **Hastings Central Library, 13 Claremont, Hastings, TN34 1HE**

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

Application No. **HS/3377/CCLB**

Key Issues: **Impact on the Character and Historic Interest of the Listed Building**

Contact Officer: **Katie Rayner, Tel No: 01273 481833**

Local Member: **Councillor Godfrey Daniel**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions as indicated in paragraph 8.1 of this report.**
-
-

CONSIDERATION BY 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 School 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 the second floor 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 and 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 surrounding buildings are predominately three to four storeys in height, although some have five or six storeys.

1.3 The site is located within Hastings 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 This proposal forms part of the programme of works currently being undertaken through the approved Listed Building Consent (Ref: HS/3301/CCLB) and planning permission (Ref: HS/3302/CC). This is for the refurbishment of the building and library incorporating the relocation of the Children’s Library, currently in Robertson Passage, to the main public library.

2.2 The proposal comprises of two parts. First, consent is sought to adjust the rainwater down pipes on the front façade of the library building. At present there is one hopper collecting the surface water from the rooves of the Library and the adjacent No.14 Claremont and with the increase in the frequency and intensity of rainfall events, this hopper often overflows. This has resulted in damage to the fabric of the building and the owners of No.14 have reported internal damp patches in the location of the hopper. The applicant therefore seeks to install a new down pipe adjacent to the existing, which will effectively separate the drainage from the Library building with No.14 Claremont. The new down pipe will also be adapted to aid in the drainage of the second floor balcony, which is currently being reconstructed due to water damage. The new down pipe is proposed to replicate the style of the existing cast iron gutters by using Alutec’s heritage style aluminium gutters in a black finish.

2.3 Second, the applicant is seeking consent to apply removable boards to the lowest part of the ground floor rear windows to protect them from graffiti and other vandalism. The rear elevation of the Library building is located within a secluded back ally and at present in order to protect the building from graffiti and vandalism the fire escape stairwell has been gated and netted. As the lower parts of the ground floor windows are still reachable the proposed window protection panels are sought to stop any graffiti being seen from the internal spaces of the library. The proposed panels will be fixed to the existing timber window frames and are designed to be weather resistant and non-combustible and will closely match the render colour of the building.

2.4 These works do not constitute development and therefore do not require separate planning permission. As such this report will focus solely on the impact of the proposal on the character and historic significance of the building.

3. Site History

3.1 HS/3373/CC – Under Consideration – Partial change of use of non-public areas of Hastings Library (D1) to allow a flexible use being a mix Library service (D1) and County Council Parking Services Offices (B1).

3.2 HS/3339/CC – Granted – 2017 – Listed building Consent for the relocation of door at third floor and additional demountable partition at lower ground floor.

3.3 HS/3302/CCNM/1 – Granted – 2016. Non-Material Amendment to planning permission Ref: HS/3302/CC to update the schedule of approved plans.

3.4 HS/3326/CCLB – Granted – 2016. Listed Building Consent for layout adjustments to ground floor toilets, additional first floor toilets and opening adjustment at lift lobby.

3.5 HS/3301/CCLB – Granted – 2016. Listed Building Consent for alterations and refurbishment of Hastings Central Library.

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

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

3.8 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.

3.9 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.

3.10 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: No observations submitted.

4.2 County Archaeologist: Wish to make no further recommendations and note that the historic fabric of the Library building will not be significantly impacted upon by the proposals.

4.3 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 the Central Area).

5.2 Hastings Development Management Plan (adopted September 2015): Policies HN1 (Development Affecting the Significance and Setting of Designated Heritage Assets) 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, and is relevant in this case.

6. Considerations

Impact on the Character and Historic Interest of the Listed Building

6.1 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 Conservation Areas.

6.2 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 heritage asset and convincingly demonstrate how their chosen design sustains and enhances the significance of any heritage assets affected, including Conservation Areas. Policy HN4 expects all applications affecting heritage assets with archaeological or historical interest or potential interest to include an appropriate Historic Environment Record (HER) desk-based assessment and, where necessary, the results of a field evaluation. An Interpretative Survey and Impact Assessment have informed the overall scheme of works to the Library building and this application is supported by a Heritage Statement, which discusses the significance of the relevant features and their protection in accordance with Policies HN1 and HN4 of the Development Management Plan.

6.3 The front façade of the Library building has high aesthetic significance within the Hastings Conservation Area, which is desirable to preserve. The proposed adaptation to the rainwater down pipe, is considered necessary to improve the existing drainage situation, protecting the fabric of the Library building and No.14

Claremont from on-going water damage. Whilst visually the separation of the existing system will result in two sets of rainwater down pipes in place of one, this will be mitigated by the use of heritage style aluminium gutters, which are designed to replicate the existing cast iron gutters. The proposed down pipe will require fixing to the building however, this is not considered to be intrusive and is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the fabric of the building. Furthermore, a small hole is required to the underside of the arch to allow the down pipe to connect to the second floor balcony drainage. At present the second floor balcony is being restored due to extensive water damage from the lack of drainage, therefore the connection to the rainwater collection system is considered a necessary enhancement to the existing system to ensure the appropriate drainage of the balcony and to protect the longevity of the building.

6.4 In addition, the rear elevation of the Library building has some aesthetic significance and is representative of its time. The proposed window protection panels, which are intended to be fixed to the lower section of the rear ground floor windows only, will result in a change to the appearance of this part of the building. Nevertheless, the panels are considered a necessary enhancement to the building to protect it from direct harm and safeguard the user experience within the library from the visual intrusion of graffiti and vandalism. It is intended that the panels will be designed to complement the light internal spaces of the library whilst matching the external rear render of the building as closely as possible, to aid their visual appearance. The applicant has also indicated that the proposed panels are removable without detriment to the building.

6.5 Overall, the proposed adaptation to the rainwater down pipe system is considered to be of benefit to the historic fabric and architectural heritage of the building, as it resolves the issue of the on-going water damage. In addition, the proposed protection panels would complement the approved general refurbishment of the Library and enhance its use as a public lending library. As such, the proposals are considered to be sympathetic to the original historic features of the building and are unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the character or significance of the listed building or the Hastings Town Centre Conservation Area. The proposed works, subject to suitable conditions, are therefore considered acceptable and satisfy the aims of policies EN1 and FA2(k) of the Hastings Planning Strategy and Policy HN1 and HN4 of the Development Management Plan.

7. Conclusion and reasons for approval

7.1 The proposed alterations to the listed building are considered necessary to protect the longevity of the fabric of the building and further optimise the use of the building as a public lending library. Furthermore, the proposals are considered to be sympathetic to the original historic features of the building and the overall aim of the refurbishment. The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policies FA2(k) and EN1 in the Hastings Planning Strategy 2014 and with Policies HN1 and HN4 in the Development Management Plan 2015.

7.2 In determining this listed building consent, the County Council has worked with the applicant and agent in a positive and proactive manner. The Council has also sought views from consultees and neighbours and has considered these in

preparing the 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.

8. Recommendation

8.1 To recommend the Planning Committee to grant Listed Building Consent subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced 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. 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, final details of the finish of the protection panels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Council's Head of Planning and Environment. 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. The County Council's Head of Planning and Environment shall be notified of any additional works identified as being necessary during the course of solely implementing the development 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.

Schedule of Approved Plans

DR-A-4244-S2 Rev A - Rear Elevation Protection Panels, DR-A-4242-S2 Rev G - Rainwater Pipe Alterations, DR-A-1005-S3 - Site Location and Block Plan

Edward Sheath
Head of Planning and Environment
3 October 2017

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Application File HS/3377/CCLB

Development Plan,

National Planning Policy Framework