

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2017/1362

**LOCATION:** Central Museum and Art Gallery, 4 Guildhall Road

**DESCRIPTION:** Remodelling and extension of museum. New courtyard extension to provide a new shoe gallery, cafe and multi-functional space and to link the buildings. New substation. Demolition to facilitate the extension. Change of use from Offices (Class B1) to museum (Class D1)

**WARD:** Castle Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Borough Council  
**AGENT:** GSS Architecture

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Council owned land and is the Applicant

**DEPARTURE:** No

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**APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The development as proposed is acceptable and would contribute to the aims of regenerating the town centre and providing a cultural focus within Deragate Conservation Area and a viable long term use for the existing buildings. The design and appearance of the new build element would contrast with but be sympathetic to the existing heritage assets and surrounding built context. The proposal would not lead to any undue impacts in respect of flood risk, highways or impact on surrounding amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies S10, E7, BN5 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 1, 5, 10 and 21 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

**2. THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application relates to the remodelling and extension of the Central Museum and Art Gallery, which comprises of a new courtyard extension to provide a new shoe gallery, café and multifunctional space to link the buildings, following the demolition of part of the existing building to facilitate the extension. In addition, the application proposes a change of use from offices (Class B1) to museum to increase the floor area of the museum. These works require the provision of a new substation, which is also included in the application.

- 2.2 The extension comprises a ground floor exhibition hall which will form the new shoe gallery. There will be a café above with space for visiting exhibitions and events along with an outside terrace providing additional seating.
- 2.3 The materials are indicated to be stone cladding, but include large areas of glass to provide views through the extension and to the older features of the existing building.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The Central Museum is located on Guildhall Road opposite the Royal and Derngate Theatre, a new hotel which is under conversion and the NN Contemporary Art Gallery. The access to the site is from Guildhall Road and via the courtyard located off Angel Street. The site comprises the existing museum, former office building and to the rear the former Gaol block.
- 3.2 To the north of the site is the former Tourist Office, now occupied as a restaurant, with a public house to its east. To the south of the site is the Vulcan Works.
- 3.3 Part of the site has been in use as a museum since 1884 in a building that also used to house a library. The library moved to its current location in Abington Street in 1910 and the current museum took over the rest of the building. The building was remodelled in 1934. In 2012 the museum was extended to its current form.
- 3.4 The buildings adjacent to the museum on Guildhall Road were constructed as the County Council Offices in 1934 in a neo-Georgian style with a stone frontage and brick on the rear elevation.
- 3.5 The former Gaol block was thought to have been constructed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and accommodated 150 prisoners within its two wings. Parts were used until 1889 when the buildings were brought by the Salvation Army, who remodelled the ground floor to remove the cells and provide an open area to hold 2,000 people in the main hall and 700 in a smaller hall.
- 3.6 The County Council purchased the buildings in 1914, with the Salvation Army remaining as tenants until 1928 and a mineral water company located in the basement. Northamptonshire County Council have now vacated the buildings and moved to One Angel Square.
- 3.7 The ownership has passed to Northampton Borough Council. These buildings are not listed, but following a review of the Derngate Conservation Area in 2006, the land and buildings were subsequently included in the Conservation Area.
- 3.8 The current buildings comprise a mixture of three and four storey buildings around an inner courtyard, which has previously been used for parking. At the top end of the courtyard is a modern garage and associated storage building, under a bridge link between the two elements of the building.
- 3.9 The Guildhall Road frontage buildings are finished in stonework, with a modern brickwork extension, whilst within the courtyard both the Old Gaol building and the rear of the Guildhall Road building are in a brick finish. Whilst some of the original windows remain, the building has been extensively remodelled over the years during its use as offices.

### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 In 2012 a two storey side extension was added to the existing building providing additional display areas for the Northampton Shoe Museum. Since that time the only other planning applications related to additional signage on the building.

## **5. PLANNING POLICY**

### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

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

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

### **5.2 National Policies**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 7 – There are three dimensions to sustainable development. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles: an economic role, a social role, an environmental role.

Paragraph 14 – Central to the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Paragraph 23 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres considers the need to allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of uses within town centres including leisure, tourism and cultural uses.

Paragraph 35 - sustainable transport – developments should be located and designed where practicable to create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians.

Paragraph 56 – Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute to making places better for people.

Paragraph 131 - Account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Paragraphs 132 - In considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Paragraph 134 - Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

### **5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy SA: presumption in favour of sustainable development requires the Council to take a positive approach that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that proposals should be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Policy S10: sustainable development principles. This includes the location of services where they can easily be accessed by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to minimise noise pollution.

Policy E7: Tourism, Visitor and Cultural Industries. This supports proposals where they contribute to the achievement of regeneration aims and objectives, they strengthen the overall tourism offer, benefit local communities and businesses and is of a use, form and scale which does not harm the quality of the natural or built environment.

Policy BN5: The Historic Environment and Landscape – Heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance.

Policy BN9 – planning for pollution control refers to the need to minimise the adverse impacts of noise.

#### **5.4 Northampton Central Area Action Plan 2013**

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

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

Policy 5: Flood risk and drainage – within the Central Area, developments are expected to implement measures that will ensure that there is no increase in the floor surface water or foul sewage to the combine or foul sewage network.

Policy 10: Parking – which restricts private parking for non-residential uses within the Town Centre boundary.

Policy 21: Angel Street – seeks to introduce active frontages for the day time and early evening along Guildhall Road and the provision of a mix of uses including café and bars within the former County Council Offices.

#### **5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)  
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

#### **5.6 Other Material Considerations**

Derngate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2006). At the time of publishing this document, the site was not included in the Conservation Area, but the plan proposed an extension to the Derngate Conservation Area which was subsequently confirmed.

## 6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **NBC Consultation** – The alterations to the external elevations will not harm the surviving historic character of the former gaol building as a non-designated heritage asset and are justified as a means of securing a suitable public use for a historically important building. A condition requiring a written and photographic record of any additional archaeological features uncovered during the course of the work to similar level 2 standard, would be appropriate.
- 6.2 **NCC Archaeology** – further information required has been requested to allow the Archaeologist to form a view on the proposal.
- 6.3 **Historic England** – no objection; refer to the Council's own specialist conservation and archaeological advisers for comment.
- 6.4 **NCC Ecology** – recommend that the site is registered under the Bat Low Impact Class Licence Scheme which would require the developer to contact a registered ecologist if bats not previously identified on the site, are subsequently found.
- 6.5 **NBC Public Protection** – no objection, subject to conditions being imposed to control noise and odour from plant and equipment within the development.
- 6.6 **Northamptonshire Police** – following the receipt of further information regarding CCTV and security, no objections are raised.
- 6.7 **NCC Highways and Access** – observations submitted and have requested that a condition be imposed regarding HGV delivering and collecting from the site.

## 7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The key issues for consideration are design, impact on the setting of heritage assets, noise and security.

### Design

- 7.2 In terms of design, the extension is an irregular shape, partly to reduce the mass that a solid regular block would create, as well as having the advantage of being able to hide the plant on the roof of the extension, required for ventilation and extraction systems.
- 7.3 The glass sections are also irregular in shape and provide additional interest and views of features in the original building, that it was considered important to retain rather than hide. One of these features is a very ornate door at first floor level with an arched window set in a stone surround with a stone keystone. Between the door and the window is a stone crest. This is not currently readily visible from the public domain, but the proposal is to incorporate this as a feature of this area.
- 7.4 Inside the exhibition gallery and café, the glass provides a light airy room that links between the two parts of the museum building. Some of the original Gaol windows remain in public view. The extension proposes a glass link between the ceiling of the shoe gallery and the first floor exhibition area, so that these features can be exposed and these areas will benefit from natural daylight.

- 7.5 The design does not seek to provide an extension that replicates the existing, but it provides a modern link that exposes some otherwise hidden features and makes them part of the overall scheme.
- 7.6 As the other parts of the building have been in office use, the application includes the change of use of both the Old Gaol block and the former County Council Offices. These parts of the building will become additional gallery and storage space for future exhibitions. As the buildings are not listed, consent is not required for any internal works, just for the change of use. However, the County Archaeologist will require that a written and photographic record of any features uncovered during the course of works is provided for future record.
- 7.7 The section of the building that is located on the corner of Guildhall Road and Angel Street is not included in this application. At this stage it is unclear how this space will be used and this will be the subject of a future application. It is considered that the overall design of the proposed extension would bring additional interest to the existing buildings and would support the future viable use of the site.

### **Impact on Heritage**

- 7.8 In terms of impact on the Conservation Area and the historic setting of the buildings, the majority of the works fall within the courtyard and will only be visible from Angel Street, albeit in distant views.
- 7.9 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. This approach is continued in Paragraph 134 which states “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use”.
- 7.10 In this instance, the works are intended to bring an extension of an existing use into being, which will in turn seek to offer a viable and public use for these prominent Town Centre buildings.
- 7.11 The Conservation Officer has been involved in pre-application discussions on this proposal over a lengthy period of time. The application has been considered and no objections raised to the submitted scheme. Historic England have indicated that they do not wish to offer any comments on the proposal and have referred the application to the Council’s own specialist conservation and archaeological advisors for comment.
- 7.12 It is considered that the alterations to the external elevations will not adversely harm the surviving historic character of the former Gaol building as a non-designated heritage asset, and are justified as a means of securing a suitable public use for a historically important building.
- 7.13 The link extension within the courtyard will be visible from Angel Street and will read as a contemporary addition, subservient to the main buildings; the addition of areas of glazing will allow the original structures to be seen and reduce the massing of the structure. A condition requiring approval of a sample of the stone to be used for the extension is suggested. The removal of the existing ramp building and modern garage/storage areas and the restoration of the 1930s arched entrance will enhance the overall appearance and setting of the buildings.
- 7.14 A sub-station is indicated to be constructed within the courtyard and its location and size are regrettable but may be unavoidable. Further detail of the sub-station will be sought as details are not currently confirmed, but it should be screened to reduce its visual impact or incorporated within the building if possible, rather than locate it within what aims to be an attractive courtyard and potential outdoor exhibition/seating area.

## **Noise and Odour**

- 7.15 The Environmental Health Officer has raised concerns about the potential for noise and disturbance associated with extraction systems located on the roof of the proposed extension. In addition, as a café is incorporated within the building, fume extraction systems need to be adequate to ensure that food odours are adequately managed. In this area of the Town Centre, there are a number of similar food type outlets, so the existing ambient noise is a consideration here, along with the knowledge that residential properties are located within Guildhall Road. This can be dealt with by condition.

## **Highways**

- 7.16 The museum intends to have visiting exhibitions in the future. Generally, these are delivered in vans, but on occasions, these could be delivered by larger HGVs. Discussions have taken place with the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to ensure that adequate space is provided for these vehicles to enter the site. The submitted drawings indicate how this will be achieved and the LHA has no objections, subject to the submission of a site management plan in relation to deliveries. A planning condition is recommended to ensure that the necessary details will be submitted.
- 7.17 The application does not proposed any parking on site, but given that this is a Town Centre location and there are car parks and public transport links nearby, this is not considered to be a significant issue and is compliant with Policy 10 of the Central Area Action Plan.

## **Security**

- 7.18 Northamptonshire Police have raised concerns about the CCTV provision around the site. The applicant is currently in discussion with suitable contractors to provide a system that meets with the requirements of the Police and although not a consideration for the planning application, for insurance purposes.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 7.19 The National Planning Policy Framework, Policy BN7 of the Joint Core Strategy and Policy 5 of the Central Area Action Plan require that development proposals do not increase the risk of flood and, where possible, offer betterment.
- 7.20 The application site is located in an area designated as Flood Zone 1 which is identified as an area of low probability of flooding, land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.
- 7.21 The site area is under 1 hectare and is not affected by other means of flooding of the site. In addition, the extension is located on an area which is currently hard surfaced, so there is no increase in size, of the non-permeable area. In this instance there is no requirement for the application to include a flood risk assessment

## **Impact on neighbouring uses**

- 7.22 The proposed use and extensions do not introduce a new use into this Town Centre location, but seek to compliment the other cultural uses in this area.
- 7.23 Bloomsbury House, located to the south of the Royal and Derngate Theatres, is occupied as residential flats. It is considered that these properties are sufficient distance away from the museum to not be significantly adversely affected by activities at the museum. That said, it would not be unreasonable to require the submission of a Construction Environment Management Plan

to ensure working and delivery hours are kept to reasonable periods (including outside peak traffic periods).

- 7.24 The extension of the museum is considered to bring new vitality into this area of the town and is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on the area.

### **Ecology**

- 7.25 The Environmental Statement indicates that during the course of surveys carried out prior to submission of the application, the Old Gaol Block contains evidence of the presence of bats foraging within the courtyard and roof and a roost was identified. As bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, it is an offence to disturb a roost.
- 7.26 Further survey work was carried out to locate the position of the roost and it was concluded that the roost will not be directly impacted by the proposed extension works and therefore will not require further action, other than monitoring and mitigation measures to avoid disturbance of this area of the building. This includes careful positioning of any construction lighting and once completed ensuring that lighting is directed downwards to avoid upward light spill.
- 7.27 Down lighting is generally recommended in a number of situations, as it reduces light pollution in both urban and rural settings as well as providing a more efficient means of lighting an area. The submitted drawings include details of lighting and it has been confirmed that the type proposed provides down-lighting.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The development as proposed is acceptable and would contribute to the aims of regenerating the town centre and providing a cultural focus within Derngate Conservation Area and a viable long term use for the existing buildings. The design and appearance of the new build element would be in contrast with but sympathetic to the existing heritage assets and surrounding built context. The proposal would not lead to any undue impacts in respect of flood risk, highways or impact on surrounding amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies S10, E7, BN5 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 1, 5, 10 and 21 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.
- 8.2 The proposal is acceptable and recommended for approval.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

1. 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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 5889-SK01-31.07.17, 5889-SK02-31.07.17, 5889-SK03-31.07.17, 5889-SK04-31.07.17, 5889-SK05-01.08.17, 5889-SK112 P1, SK01, SK02, SK100C, SK101C, SK102B, SK103B, SK104, SK105, SK150A, SK151A, SK153, SK154, SK156, SK157, SK160, SK500, SK501, SK502, SK520, SK521, A120/PE-01A, A120/PE-02A, A120/PE-03A, A120/SEC-01.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application.

3. Details of all proposed external facing materials of the extension and substation shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.



Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

4. A scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which specifies the sources of noise on the site whether from fixed plant or equipment or noise generated within the building and the provisions to be made for its control and the approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby occupants from noise and vibration amenity in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

5. A scheme for the collection, treatment and dispersal of cooking smells and fumes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved scheme shall have been implemented prior to the premises being used for the permitted purpose and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the surrounding locality and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

6. Prior notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority of the exact date on which it is proposed that construction of the development hereby permitted is to begin. During the construction period representatives of the Local Planning Authority shall be allowed access to the site in order to observe and inspect all excavation works and record all findings of archaeological interest. If required they shall be allowed to excavate such remains, provided that this shall not interfere unreasonably with the progress of the development.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

7. No alteration or demolition shall take place until a programme of buildings recording has been compiled and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the recording brief issued by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

8. Prior to the commencement of works on site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall indicate measures to mitigate impacts on ecology, air quality, waste, noise and vibration, hours of operation and haul routes to and from the site. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the CEMP.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory standard of development and protect residential amenities of the area in accordance with Policy S10, BN2 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

9. Prior to the occupation of the extension hereby approved, the CCTV scheme as indicated on drawing A120 SEC-01 shall be installed and operational and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory and secure standard of development in accordance with the requirements of Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 10 Details of the provision for the storage of refuse and materials for recycling shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the first occupation or bringing into use of the building hereby permitted and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Notwithstanding the submitted drawings, further details of the proposed sub-station, including elevations and materials, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the extension. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory and secure standard of development in accordance with the requirements of Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Prior to the occupation of the extension hereby approved, a site management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall include arrangements for accepting deliveries of visiting exhibitions to and from the site by heavy good vehicles. The approved site management plan shall be implemented at all times when the building is in use as a museum.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

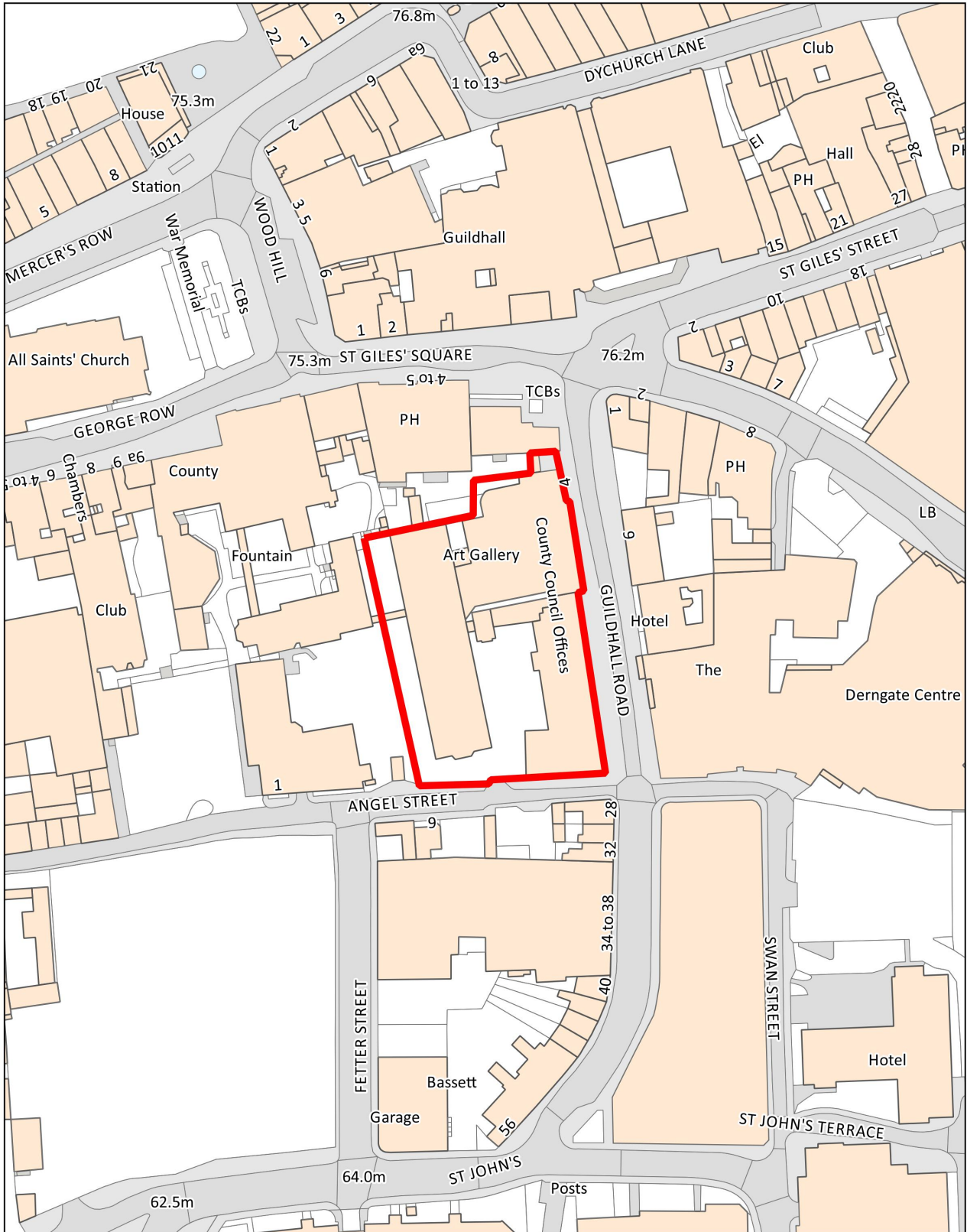
- 10.1 Application number N/2017/1362

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The development is not CIL liable

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Title: **Central museum & Art Gallery, 4 Guildhall Road**

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Date: 13-11-2017

Scale: 1:1,250

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