

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2018/0397

**LOCATION:** The Guildhall , St Giles Square

**DESCRIPTION:** Listed Building Application for the installation of primary and secondary barriers and control access through existing openings with new sliding doors, door furniture and electronic locks

**WARD:** Castle Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Borough Council  
**AGENT:** Roger Coy Partnership

**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 proposed works would not cause significant harm upon the character and appearance of this Listed Building, whilst supporting the ongoing use of this important heritage asset. The level of harm to the character, fabric and historic layout of the building would be less than substantial. The proposal is therefore in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 1 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

#### **2 THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks Listed Building Consent for the installation of primary and secondary barriers, controlled access through existing openings with new sliding doors, door furniture and electronic locks at the Guildhall.

2.2 There have been extensive discussions, including with Historic England, on how to improve security within The Guildhall without causing harm to the character and fabric of the building. These discussions are reflected in the current application.

#### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The Guildhall is a Grade II\* Listed Building, which was a purpose built town hall in 1861-4 by Edward Godwin in the Gothic style of the late C12. It was later extended in 1889-92 by Matthew Holding, with interiors by Albert Jeffrey. In 1992 it was further extended to the eastern flank.
- 3.2 The Guildhall is constructed of stone with a slate roof and has an irregular shaped footprint. Its internal layout consists of rooms and chambers around a pair of central staircases and accessed of long corridors or galleries.
- 3.3 Much of the older part of the building has unrestricted access along these corridors and this has been a concern for some time in terms of the security of the building.

## **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 N/1989/945 – demolition of 1 and 2 storey extension fronting Dychurch Lane, erection of 5 and 6 storey extension, alterations to form office accommodation. Approved 30/08/1989.
- 4.2 N/1989/14048 – internal refurbishment and redecoration. Approved 14/02/1990.
- 4.3 N/1991/65 – alterations to rooms in the North West of the Guildhall including windows. Approved 03/04/1991.
- 4.4 N/1991/14008 – Alterations to the Mayors Room, retiring room and related facilities with new bay window on wall to provide single reception room etc. Approved 03/04/1991.
- 4.5 N/1992/5054 – coat of arms. Approved 23/09/1992.
- 4.6 N/2002/1659 – installation of audio visual facilities to Council Chamber, Great Hall and Jeffery Room. Approved 07/04/2003.
- 4.7 N/2004/0572 – provision of new entrance lobby in the courtyard to access a new one stop shop. Approved 24/06/2004.
- 4.8 N/2010/0910 – removal of stud partition walls erected since 1948, re-opening of an existing doorway, rewiring and improvements to lighting. Approved 23/11/2010.

## **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), Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies, Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013),

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### **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 17 - Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Paragraphs 58 and 69 - ensure that policies and decisions aim to create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life of community cohesion; and take into account the more up to date information about higher risk sites in their area for malicious threats including steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience.

Paragraph 129 - Identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal.

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 BN5 - The Historic Environment and Landscape

Policy S10 - sustainable development principles

### **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 policy includes:

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.

### **5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

### **5.6 Other Material Considerations**

All Saints Conservation Area Appraisal

## **6 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

**6.1 NBC Conservation Section** - Consider that the level of harm to the character, fabric and historic layout of the building would be less than substantial and, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, needs to be weighed against the wider benefit of securing and allowing continued public use of the building.

**6.2 Historic England** – whilst the proposed works would not be entirely without impact, and would therefore result in limited harm to the significance of the Guildhall as a heritage asset, are mindful of the negotiations that have taken place in order to arrive at an appropriate solution, also recognised that the proposal would deliver public benefit. On balance would support the application in principle.

## **7 APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The proposed works are required following a review of security measures in respect of personal safety and working environment within the Guildhall, it was identified that works were required to manage access to various parts of the building.
- 7.2 The works involve the addition of a glass screen with sliding doors by the Great Hall and control access through existing openings with new door furniture and electronic locks. The works would not reduce means of access to the public areas of the building.
- 7.3 It is considered that the scheme will have a limited and largely reversible impact. The alterations to the doors, door surrounds and skirtings to fit the electronic locks and card readers, and the cable routings, have been designed to be as discreet as possible and to minimise harm to historic fabric. In many cases, wiring can be located within the existing timber conduit that is located at high level. The majority of the work relates to doors on the ground floor. The door affected are;
- 5 doors in the Great Hall – door opening and closing devices, removal of mounted push bars
  - 3 doors controlling access to the Mayors Corridor, Court Room and Parlour – door opening and closing devices.
- 7.4 The only first floor doors where works are proposed are the pair of highly decorated doors at the end of the corridor leading to the Council Chamber. It is proposed that just electronic locking systems are installed.
- 7.5 The installation and the design of the glazed door and screen within the corridor linking the Godwin section of The Guildhall with the later extension will have a limited impact on the layout of the building, although the fabric of this part of the building has previously been altered. The glazing is indicated to be lightly frosted to minimise the marks such as finger prints, whilst still allowing vision of the corridor.
- 7.6 As all of the proposed works are within the Guildhall Building, it is considered that there is no adverse impact on the All Saints Conservation Area.
- 7.7 Historic England were consulted on the application and have noted that the application meets the requirements of Paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF. No objections have been received from other interested parties and it is considered that the works would not result in demonstrable or irreversible harm to the Listed Building.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposed works are considered to be minimally obtrusive and would not have a significantly demonstrable impact on the historic fabric of the Guildhall. The benefits of the works outweigh any harm to the building and as such are considered to be acceptable.

## **9 CONDITIONS**

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

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 4106/01, 4106/02, 4106/03, 4106/04, 4106/05, 4106/06A, 4106/07, 4106/08, 4106/09, 4106/20B, 4106/22, 4106/23, 4106/24, 4106/25A, 4106/26, 4106/27, 4106/28, 4106/29, 4106/map, 4106/security updates, GEZE TS 2000v overhead door closer.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the listed building consent application.

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

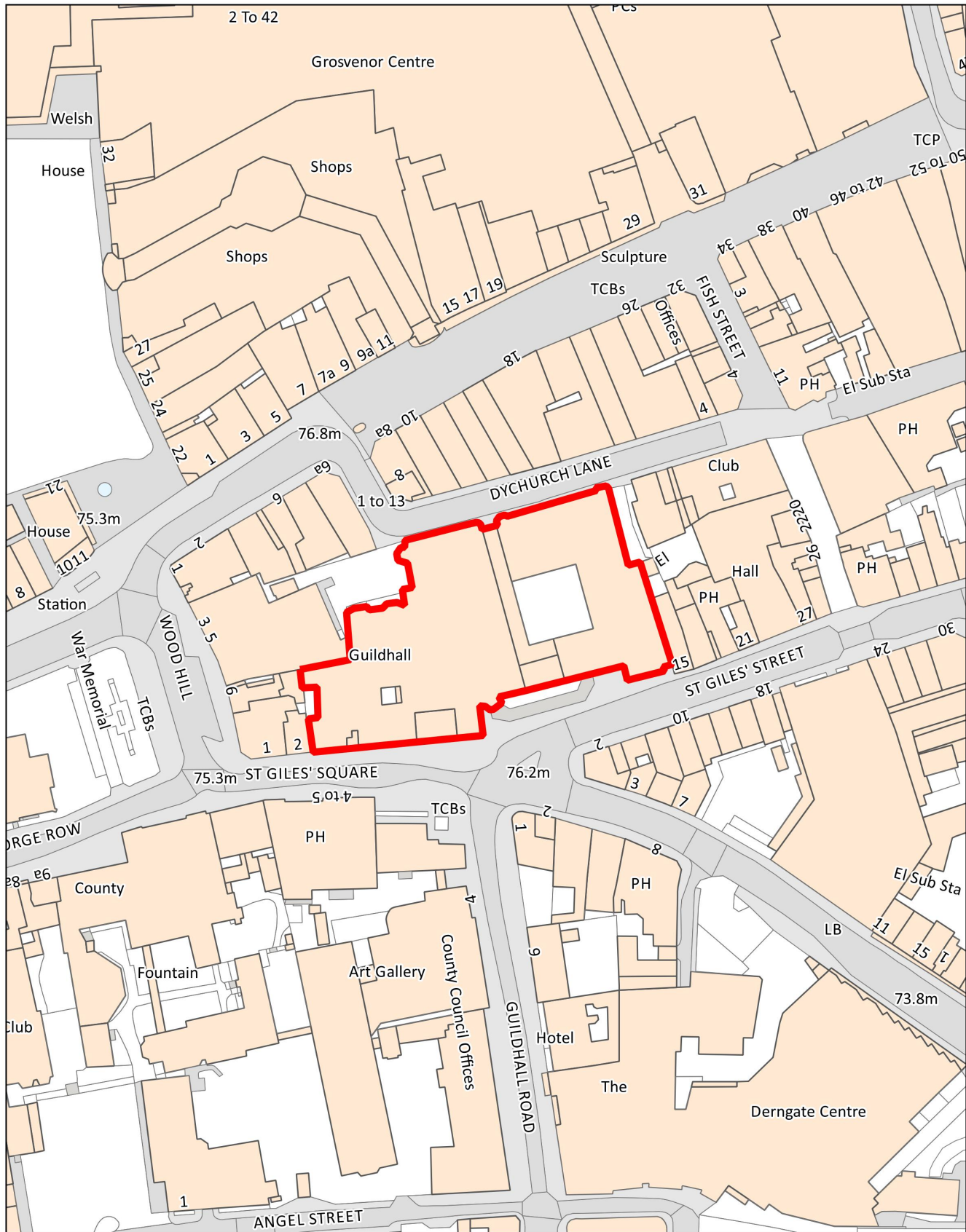
10.1 N/2018/0397.

## **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.



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **The Guildhall, St Giles Square**

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Scale: 1:1.250

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