

Planning Committee

Report of Head of Planning and Building Control on 07 October 2021

Plans List Item Number: 5

Reason for bringing to committee

Council owned land/building

Application Details

Location: WALSALL COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, LICHFIELD STREET, WALSALL, WS1 1UZ

Proposal: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION FOR 3 REPLACEMENT AUDIO VISUAL (PAN, TILT AND ZOOM) AUTOMATED CAMERAS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER (SAME POSITIONS AS EXISTING) PLUS 4 NEW AUDIO VISUAL (PAN, TILT AND ZOOM) AUTOMATED CAMERAS IN CONFERENCE ROOM 2 (ONE IN EACH CORNER OF THE ROOM). A NEW DATA SOCKET TO BE INSTALLED IN THE VOID BENEATH THE VIEWING GALLERY.

Application Number: 21/1307

Case Officer: Helen Smith

Applicant: Walsall Council

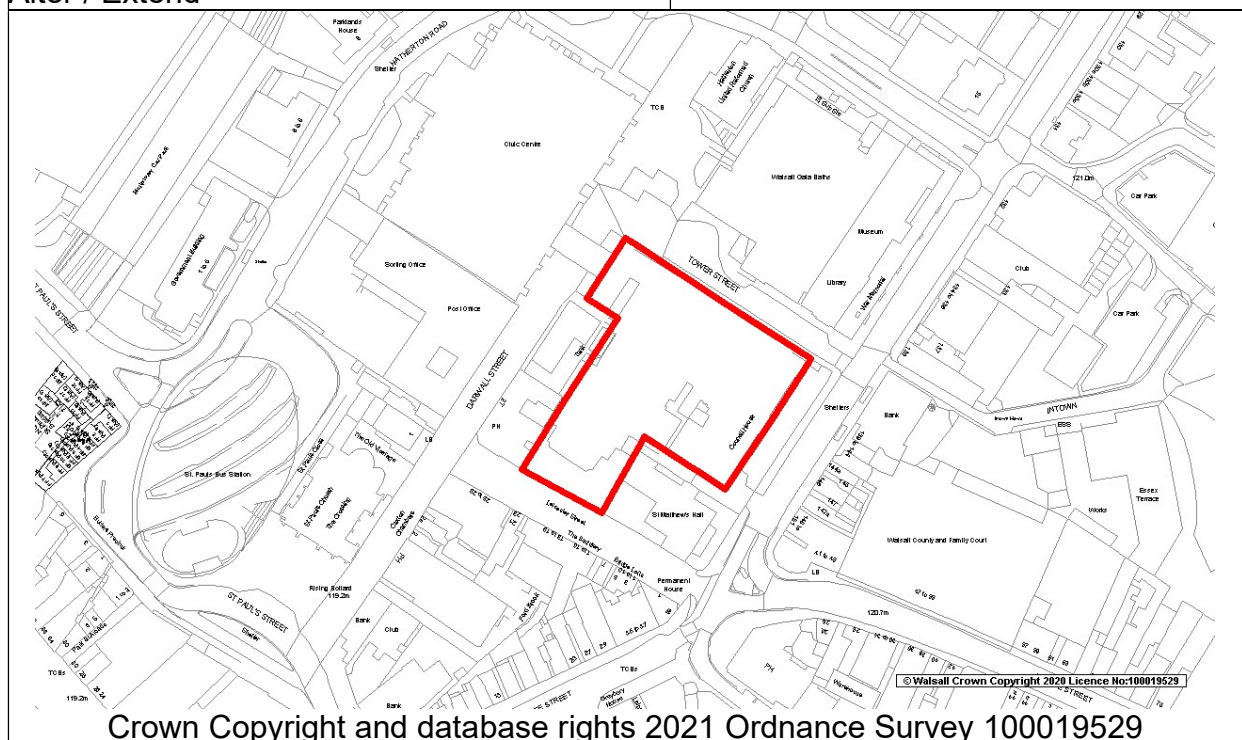
Ward: St Matthews

Agent: Baart Harries Newall Architects

Expired Date: 01-Nov-2021

Application Type: Listed Building Consent:
Alter / Extend

Time Extension Expiry:



Recommendation

Delegate to the Head of Planning and Building Control to Grant Listed Building Consent Subject to Conditions, and finalising of planning conditions

Proposal

This application for Listed Building Consent is for the following alterations and additions to Walsall Council House;

- 3 replacement audio visual (pan, tilt and zoom) automated cameras in the Council Chamber (same positions as existing)
- 4 new audio visual (pan, tilt and zoom) automated cameras in Conference Room 2 (one in each corner of the room).
- New data socket to be installed in the void beneath the viewing gallery.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement of 7/9/21 which states the following;

- Existing camera brackets will be unscrewed, and the plugs removed
- Existing surface mounted cables will be carefully removed, and the pin holes filled
- Existing plug holes will be filled and sanded smooth
- The wall surfaces will be re-painted to match the existing wall surface colour finish
- A new data socket installed in the void beneath the viewing gallery
- Fixings for new camera brackets will be drilled and plugged to accept matching black screws
- New cameras will be located as shown on the attached drawings
- A single thin cable will be taken horizontally to nearby architraves or pilasters
- A vertical drop will be neatly pinned into the corner of architraves and pilasters as existing
- New cameras and brackets will be neatly installed in locations to be finally agreed on site with the Conservation Officer

Site and Surroundings

Walsall Council House dates from the first decade of the 20th Century and is a stone facade Grade II Listed Civic Building located within the Lichfield Street Conservation Area.

At the corner of Darwall Street and Leicester Street there is Varsity public house. To the southern side of the site is Leicester Street and at the corner of Leicester Street and Lichfield Street is St Matthews Hall public house, which is also a grade II listed building. Numbers 1 to 15 are grade II listed buildings. To the northern side of the Council House is Tower Street housing the Gala baths. Opposite Lichfield Street are numbers 144a to 147a which are also grade II listed buildings.

The site is within Lichfield Street Conservation Area and Walsall Town Centre.

Relevant Planning History

20/1644 - Listed Building Consent: Replacement of existing boilers and heating system, including introduction of air conditioning to second floor chambers and Mayor's Parlour – Granted Listed Building Consent subject to conditions 9/4/21

20/0014 - Listed Building Consent: Provision of new timber and glazed doors with surrounds to foyer of Council House and alterations to existing reception desk to enable it to be moved to a position of 90 degrees of existing (when required) – currently under assessment and not yet determined

19/1344 - Listed Building Consent for re-upholstery of leather covered seating in the Council Chamber – Granted Listed Building Consent 10/12/19

19/0406 - Provision of new glazed (electrically operated) security gate to the internal ground floor of the Council House - Granted Listed Building Consent 1/5/19

18/0831 - Provision of new glazed (electrically operated) security gate to the internal ground floor reception area of the Council House – Listed Building Consent granted 13/08/18

17/1187 - Replace 2 no. windows in Council House and Town Hall and carry out repairs to 2 no. other windows. Work to be done in the same corridor area of the 2nd floor of the Council House – Granted Listed Building Consent 1/12/17

14/0347/FL - Erection of 8m high flagpole on the forecourt of The Council House, Lichfield Street. Granted Subject to Conditions 08/05/2014.

12/0988/LB - 12/0987/AD, Non Illuminated advert 1m by 0.7m. Consent granted

12/1284/LB - Replacements, repairs and cleaning of forecourt balustrading and walls of Council House. Consent granted.

Relevant Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's position on the role of the planning system in both plan-making and decision-taking. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, in economic, social and environmental terms, and it emphasises a *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"*.

Key provisions of the NPPF relevant in this case:

- **NPPF 4 – Decision Making**
- **NPPF 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

On **planning conditions**, the NPPF (para 55) says:

Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early is beneficial to

all parties involved. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided unless there is a clear justification.

On **decision-making** the NPPF sets out the view that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applications to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Pre-application engagement is encouraged.

Reducing Inequalities

The Equality Act 2010 (the '2010 Act') sets out 9 protected characteristics which should be taken into account in all decision making.

Development Plan

www.go.walsall.gov.uk/planning_policy

Saved Policies of Walsall Unitary Development Plan

- 3.13 to 3.15 Building Conservation & Archaeology
- GP2: Environmental Protection
- ENV27: Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest
- ENV32: Design and Development Proposals

Black Country Core Strategy

- CSP4: Place Making
- ENV2: Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness
- ENV3: Design Quality

Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan 2019

AAPLV5: Protecting and Enhancing Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness

AAPLV6: Securing Good Design

Supplementary Planning Documents

Designing Walsall

- DW3 Character

Other Legislation and Policy:

- **Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

16(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall 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.

66 (1) In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall 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.

72 (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

- National Design Guide
- Historic England Good Practice Advice Note1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Designation.
- Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment.
- Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets.
- Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets.
- Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation (2009).
- Lichfield Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Consultation Replies

Conservation Officer - No objections subject to safeguarding conditions requiring additional details on the methods of removal and installation of new cameras.

Representations

None received

Determining Issues

- Listed building and its Setting
- Planning Balance regarding works to the Listed Building
- Conservation Area

Assessment of the Proposal

Listed Building and its Setting

In determining any planning application, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings as set out in sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Regard should also be given to the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 189 to 198.

The proposed works would be carried out to the interior of the building and the proposed 3 new cameras would be installed in the same position as the existing cameras in the Council Chamber. Existing fixing pin holes would be carefully restored as outlined in the Heritage Statement and new pinholes created for the replacement and additional 4 no. cameras in Conference Room 2.

The proposed new fixings are considered would be reversible in the future if the cameras are no longer required and removed. Safeguarding conditions will be required to secure additional detail relating to the following;

- What the existing pin holes used to hold the cables will be filled with.
- What grade sandpaper will be used to sand any excess filling material.
- the paint to be used to paint the walls.

- The exact location the new data socket below the void viewing gallery will be installed.
- What drill will be used to drill holes to fix the new camera brackets.
- How will the camera cable be fixed against the historic fabric of the building?
- Further details on the vertical drop.

The Heritage Statement states that new cabling would be neatly pinned into the corner of architraves and pilasters as existing and the proposed new data socket would be installed in the void beneath the viewing gallery. However additional detail on the proposed methods will be required as the existing camera brackets will be unscrewed and the plugs removed, there are no details as to how the existing screw holes will be filled.

The proposal is considered would not harm the character or setting of this listed building and would only have a minor impact on the interior of the building.

Subject to safeguarding conditions, as mentioned above, to meet the 6 tests it is considered that the proposal will serve to preserve and enhance the significance of the asset in accordance with conservation principles, policies and guidance developed by Historic England. The principle of the proposed development is therefore supported, and the works are considered appropriate.

Planning Balance regarding works to the Listed Building

As a listed building is defined as a 'heritage asset' it is necessary to determine if the harm is 'substantial harm' (paragraph 193) or 'less than substantial harm' (paragraph 196). The assessment must balance the scale of the harm against the significance of the heritage assets.

The proposed works are considered would have less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of Lichfield Street Conservation Area as all works will be internal within the Council House.

The proposed works are considered would have less than substantial harm to the significance and setting of adjacent listed buildings, as all works will be internal within the Council House.

Planning conditions are recommended to secure the above details to ensure any works do not result in harm to the historic fabric of the Grade II listed building.

Conservation Area

The proposals are considered would have a minimal impact on the external appearance of the application site, the character and appearance of the Lichfield Street Conservation Area would be negligible. It is assessed that the proposed development could comply with the requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas as outlined in national legislation.

Conclusions and Reasons for Decision

In weighing the material planning considerations, taking into account the local and national planning guidance, it is considered that the proposal would be reversible in the future with minimal impact on the historic character and setting of this listed building.

The use of safeguarding conditions can be included if approved to meet the 6 tests: necessary; relevant to planning and; to the development to be permitted; enforceable; precise and reasonable in all other respects within the national planning guidance are fully met.

As such the development is considered to meet the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (para 196), policies, ENV2 and ENV3 of the Black Country Core Strategy, policy AAPLV5 AND AAPLV6 of Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan and saved policies GP2, ENV27 and ENV32 of Walsall Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Document Policy DW3 of Designing Walsall.

Taking into account the above factors it is considered that the application should be recommended for approval. The economic and social benefits in this instance are considered would not have an unacceptable impact on the environment.

Positive and Proactive Working with the Applicant

Officers have confirmed to the applicant's agent that the submitted details are acceptable and no further changes have been requested.

Recommendation

Delegate to the Head of Planning and Building Control to Grant Listed Building Consent Subject to Conditions, and finalising of planning conditions

Conditions and Reasons

1: The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory commencement of the development in accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2a. Notwithstanding the submitted details and prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, full details including:

- i. A plan at a scale of 1:20 showing the exact position of the new camera brackets to be located in the walls of the Council House and conference room two.
- ii. What tools will be used to create new fixing holes for the camera brackets in the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- iii. The type of screws/fixings/plugs that will be used to fix the camera brackets to the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- iv. The method and tools that will be used to fix the new camera cables to the historic fabric/walls of the Council House and conference room 2;
- v. The method that will be used to fill the existing screw fixing holes of the existing camera brackets in the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- vi. The type of lime putty to be used to fill the existing camera bracket screw fixing holes in the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- vii. The sandpaper grade that will be used to sand down any excess lime putty material used to fill the existing screw fixing holes in the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- viii. The type of breathable paint, including manufacturers details that will be used to paint the walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- ix. How the existing camera cables attached to the historic fabric/walls of the Council House and conference room 2 will be removed;

- x. How the existing pin holes used to fix the existing cable to the historic fabric/walls of the Council House and conference room two will be filled;
- xi. What putty/material will be used to fill the existing cable pin holes in the historic fabric/walls of the Council House and conference room two;
- xii. A plan at a scale of 1:20 showing the exact location the new data socket to be located below the void of the viewing gallery;
- xiii. How the new data socket will be fixed to the historic fabric of the building including the tools and fixings to be used to fix the new data socket to the historic fabric of the building;
- xiv. Clarification as to what is meant by a vertical drop and what method will be used to pin into the architraves and pilasters.

shall be submitted in writing to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

2b. Any excess lime putty/ material used to fill the existing camera bracket screw fixing holes in the walls/historic fabric of Council House and conference room 2 shall not be sanded down other than by hand.

2c. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proposed works are sympathetic to the conservation of historic fabric and character of this Grade II listed building and in accordance with Section 16, 66 and 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy ENV27 of the UDP, Policy EN5 of the SAD and Policy ENV2 of the BCCS.

END OF OFFICERS REPORT