



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee North** - 14 November 2023

**Application no** DC/23/2050/LBC

**Location**

Former Town Hall  
High Street  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 1HU

**Expiry date** 18 July 2023

**Application type** Listed Building Consent

**Applicant** Lowestoft Town Council

**Parish** Lowestoft

**Proposal** Listed Building Consent - Restoration and extension of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall, to form a heritage hub, cafe, gallery, community event space, Town Council office, and registrar offices.

**Case Officer** Andrew Martin  
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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Listed building consent is sought for works of alteration and extension of the Former Town Hall, a Grade II listed building, as part of proposals to form a heritage hub, café, gallery, community event space, Town Council office, and registrar offices. There is an associated application for planning permission, which seeks to also establish the change of use of the site, under reference DC/23/2049/FUL.
- 1.2. The application has been amended during the determination period in response to officer feedback, with the originally proposed canopy to the principal entrance having been omitted. There are no objections to the application from consultees.
- 1.3. It is considered that the proposed works would have a neutral to beneficial impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed building. The proposal therefore accords with the Development Plan, with no material considerations indicating the application should be determined otherwise, and as such the application is recommended for approval.
- 1.4. The application has been referred to Planning Committee (North) as the Head of Planning and Coastal Management considers the application to be significant due to the Council's previous ownership of the site and the importance of the project for the town of Lowestoft.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1. The application site is Lowestoft Town Hall, High Street, Lowestoft. It is a Grade II listed building, located within the North Lowestoft Conservation Area, that was designed by John Louth Clemence and built between 1857 and 1860. The building was subsequently altered between 1869 and 1873, and then rebuilt and extended between 1899 and 1905, with further extensions constructed during the twentieth century.
- 2.2. The Town Hall is a good example of a civic building in the Italianate style with its principal façade on the High Street and Compass Street, dating from 1905, having been composed with aesthetically pleasing proportions and ornate detailing. High quality materials are used across the Town Hall to good effect with the gault brick dressings providing a subtle contrast to the rich red brick, whilst the stone carved detailing is reserved to emphasise the principal entrances.
- 2.3. Internally, the principal rooms of interest are those in the main range facing onto the High Street, including the entrance hall, staircase hall and reception room on the ground floor, and the Council Chamber and Chairman's room on the first floor. These rooms are of particular importance due to the quality of their fixtures and fittings. The Council Chamber is especially significant as the only surviving part of Clemence's original design, and it also contains the original stained glass donated by Sir Morton Peto.
- 2.4. The former New Market Inn Public house, previously incorporated into the Town Hall circa 1870, was specifically excluded from the listing when Historic England amended it in 2018.
- 2.5. The Town Hall is a local landmark within the oldest part of Lowestoft, due to its scale, prominence, campanile-style clock tower, and architectural quality. Its history of civic use contributes very importantly to the landmark status of the building.

### **3. Proposal**

3.1. The application seeks listed building consent for works to the Grade II listed Town Hall building. The works are related to the restoration and extension of the building to facilitate its use as a heritage hub, café, gallery, community event space, Town Council office, and registrar offices. The proposed works are summarised as follows:

- Demolition of existing building elements, including the 1930's archive building.
- Extensions to the building, including the construction of a new events hall with a lightweight, glazed link, and a gallery extension.
- Creation of a new landscaped courtyard garden.
- Opening up and reconfiguration of internal spaces throughout the building, including the Council Chamber undercroft and central yard, to improve legibility, function, accessibility, and circulation.
- Introducing two new lifts, a platform lift, and a number of internal and external ramps.
- Infilling the existing lightwell to the north of the Council Chamber volume, to create a new kitchen.
- Infilling of the basement below the lightwell.
- Removal of the dais in the Council Chamber to create a level floor throughout the space.
- Provision of new services and the creation of service routes, including a ventilation system for the Council Chamber.
- Installation of plant and photovoltaic panels.
- Provision of a new opening in the floor of the second-floor platform within the clock tower, to allow visitors to the first floor to see up into the town which would otherwise be inaccessible.
- Infill of selected openings with new brickwork.
- Restoration of existing windows, including the application of secondary glazing, and where necessary replacement with heritage sliding sash windows with slimline double glazing.
- Installation of awnings to the windows facing onto Compass Street.
- Installation of banners for future signage.
- External repairs, including the repair and repointing of masonry; stripping cement-based render; the repair of leadwork; increase in rainwater goods capacity.
- Repair and replacement of slate to roofs, with the roofs to also be internally insulated.
- Replacement of external modern light fittings with heritage style fittings.

3.2. The development associated with the proposed change of use, extensions, and external alterations is addressed through the concurrent application for planning permission under reference DC/23/2049/FUL.

### **4. Planning History**

4.1. The following planning history is relevant to the application site:

- DC/97/0174/LBC – Listed Building Consent – Erection of a sign to existing window opening – Approved on 07.03.1997
- DC/99/0162/LBC – Listed Building Consent – Internal alterations – Approved on 23.07.1999
- DC/05/0206/LBC – Listed Building Consent – Provision of floodlighting to illuminate flagpole to comply with flag flying protocol – Approved on 24.08.2005
- DC/05/0205/RG3 – Provision of floodlighting to illuminate flagpole to comply with flag flying protocol – Approved on 20.06.2023
- DC/11/0908/FUL – Remove existing remains of disused chimney and extend existing roof covering over area of chimney – Approved on 14.11.2011
- DC/11/0910/LBC – Listed Building Consent – Remove existing remains of disused chimney and extend existing roof covering over area of chimney – Approved on 14.11.2011
- DC/16/2733/DEM – Prior Notification – Demolition of former Council offices and boundary wall to Mariners Street car park – Prior approval required and given on 26.08.2016
- DC/23/2050/LBC – Listed Building Consent – Restoration and extension of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall, to form a heritage hub, café, gallery, community event space, Town Council office, and registrar offices – Pending determination

## 5. Consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Historic England	2 June 2023	23 June 2023

Summary of comments: The full comments from Historic England, which relate to this application for listed building consent and application DC/23/2049/FUL, can be found on public access, via the Council's website, but the main points are summarised as follows:

- Current Town Hall comprises a complex assemblage of structures, the oldest of which is the 1857 Council Chamber and underlying spaces.
- Later nineteenth and early twentieth century extensions to the building comprise a somewhat awkward arrangement of spaces, small offices, staircases and ancillary areas tied together by the unifying façade and central clocktower of its exterior.
- Town Hall is the most recognisable landmark in the north of Lowestoft and represents the historic civic heart of the town centre.
- Town Hall is a Grade II listed building owing to its high level of historic and architectural interest and is a strong contributory feature that lends significance to the North Lowestoft Conservation Area.
- The former Crown Inn public house, which forms the south-west wing of the complex, is excluded from the listing under the provisions of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.
- Proposals comprise the comprehensive regeneration of the Town Hall and its site into a multi-use complex that, amongst other matters, recaptures its place at the civic heart of the town by incorporating the offices and ceremonial spaces required by Lowestoft's Town Council, and the Registry Offices.
- The uses proposed are the result of extensive public engagement and consultation carried out during the project development phase.

- The project forms one of the key strands to the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone, instigated in 2017.
- Removal of later partitions within the building and the creation of an internal 'yard' will create an attractive and enticing new area of public circulation where the existing arrangement is cramped, poorly lit and confusing.
- Noted that the modifications proposed affect elements of lesser significance, and overall they would cause minimal harm to the overall significance of the building.
- No concerns regarding the removal of the Mariners Street extension and its replacement.
- Design of new events space is positive, subject to appropriate materials, and will complement the historic core of the Town Hall complex positively.
- Support the creation of an outside garden space.
- Slight concern over the relationship of the northern elevation of the events hall, along with the garden wall, with the road. Currently it is a long blank elevation to the street and represents a missed opportunity to enhance and 'activate' the street scene, whilst retaining the enclosure evidently desired for privacy and security.
- Concern over introducing a pond to the courtyard as it would create unnecessary risk for users and takes up a fairly substantial amount of the quite limited outside space.
- Pleased that the former Crown Inn public house is being retained. Mansard roof alteration to accommodate services is considered to be the least intrusive solution.
- Proposal reorders the south and west facing elevations of the former public house quite considerably, resulting in a negative impact which would be reduced if more of the existing openings were to be reused, including the principal entrance door.
- Cooling and heating proposals have been the subject of considerable discussion at the pre-application stage. Considered that the current proposals represent the least harmful option.
- No concerns regarding the installation of solar panels as proposed. The panels would be minimally visible from the street level and would cause no harm to the significance of the Town Hall or Conservation Area.
- Heritage Statement clearly demonstrates the historic precedent for the use of solar shading to the south-facing windows.
- Proposals are an exciting opportunity to bring the vacant Town Hall back into use as a civic and community building that the town could rightly be very proud of and would secure its long-term conservation.
- Whilst there are some elements of the proposal which are considered to be harmful to the listed building's significance, Historic England are generally supportive of the scheme.
- Local planning authority should carry out the planning balance and consider whether the proposals would be justified or outweighed by the public benefit in their current form, or whether they should be amended.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC County Archaeological Unit	2 June 2023	24 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections to the proposal. No archaeological conditions recommended subject to the submission of an archaeological evaluation report approved by SCC Archaeology.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Lowestoft Town Council	2 June 2023	29 June 2023
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p>“Thank you for providing Lowestoft Town Council with this planning application consultation. However, as applicant and landowner, the Town Council will not submit a recommendation.”</p>		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	2 June 2023	23 June 2023
<p>Summary of comments: The full comments from the Council’s Principal Design and Conservation Officer, which relate to this listed building consent application and application DC/23/2049/FUL, can be found on public access, via the Council’s website, but the main points are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application follows a period of positive pre-application engagement on the proposed development.</li> <li>• List description for the Town Hall was updated in September 2018.</li> <li>• Town Hall is listed for Group Value with a considerable number of listed buildings, particularly nos. 41-42, 43-44, 45 and 56 opposite.</li> <li>• Changes to the Town Hall can have impacts and effects on the significance of other listed buildings identified within the same group.</li> <li>• The submitted Heritage, Design and Access Statement, and the Conservation Management Plan meet the requirements of the NPPF.</li> <li>• Disagree with the conclusion in the submitted information that there would be less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.</li> <li>• It is considered that the effects of the proposal on the significance of the listed building will be neutral to beneficial, leading, overall, to the preservation of its special interest.</li> <li>• Usually suggest including a condition requiring deposition to the Suffolk Historic Environment Record. The Conservation Management Plan includes a 2019 Statement of Significance as one of its appendices. If this can be extracted and deposited at the HER, this would satisfy paragraph 193 of the NPPF alongside as-existing drawings.</li> <li>• Principle of the proposals for the reuse of the Town Hall building are strongly supported.</li> <li>• Repurposing the landmark building will not only conserve the important heritage asset but contribute significantly the revitalisation of the historic core of Lowestoft and its Conservation Area.</li> <li>• The building’s redundancy in 2015 placed it at risk through vacancy, absence of a new use and a change in ownership.</li> <li>• Town Council has been a responsible owner while the future of the building is being determined.</li> <li>• Comprehensive approach taken to the project has been exceptional and is fully supported.</li> <li>• The building is of a scale and character that can no longer support a single use.</li> <li>• Felt strongly that the building is a public building and should retain publicly accessible uses, as proposed.</li> </ul>		

- Relocation of the Town Council into the building, and the inclusion of the registrar office, is a significant benefit of the current proposal. It would retain and maintain the original purpose of the building, which is an important conservation benefit.
- Proposal represents a positive re-use of the building which will retain its civic use, and which will also add further uses that will populate all spaces of the building; provide for its use to extend into evenings and weekends; diversify its range of users; and retain the building in a public use.
- Proposal layout and changes follow on closely from those supported at the pre-application stage.
- Proposals recognise those parts of the building that are most sensitive to change and therefore minimise change to them.
- Equally, the proposals recognise those parts of the building that are least sensitive to change and provide for necessary change to be focussed in these areas.
- Proposals utilise opportunities to introduce permeability into a building layout that is complicated by years of extension and adaptation, and this is strongly welcomed.
- Proposals also make best use of the associated rear courtyard space to the Town Hall through an extension which will enclose it and assist in the repair of the townscape in this area of Mariners Street.
- The proposals cannot repair the damage wrought through demolition to the west of the Town Hall which has harmed its setting and that to the Conservation Area, as well as the local townscape.
- Mix of uses and their arrangement within the layout provide an excellent fit with the building's character and layout.
- The building is considered to be eminently adaptable and the submitted proposals are sensitive to important surviving historic fabric and features.
- Application does not include plans and elevations marked up to indicate demolitions, but, based upon the outcome of the pre-application process and knowledge of the proposals, it is considered that the demolitions, layout changes, and additions proposed are acceptable.
- There will be some minor loss of historic fabric and layout legibility, but the effects arising from the impact of that will be neutral overall on the significance of the building.
- Proposed additions to the building are to the upper level and rear of the former New Market Inn; the rear courtyard to the Town Hall; and to the Mariners Street elevation.
- The former New Market Inn is not part of the listed building, but it is part of the Conservation Area and is identified as a positive unlisted building in the adopted Conservation Area appraisal (2021).
- The New Market Inn building would have its eaves raised and roof replaced with one that hides the plant behind it, in effect a false roof. The building would also be extended northwards. Proposals to the building will increase its bulk and the new roof would result in a rather strange proportion, but there is a substantial functional benefit to the changes, as the roof would hide new plant. The rear extension would be appropriately designed. The changes to the building are considered to be acceptable on that basis.
- Additions to the rear courtyard to the Town Hall, which will house the event hall and ancillary spaces, are acceptable in principle and design. Strongly support the creation and meaningful use of the limited external space to the rear of the Town Hall. Presentation of the rear of the site to Mariners Street, along with the abutting screen wall, is very welcome.
- Event hall design adopts a bold gabled profile with generous glazing and permeability into the courtyard space and is linked to the main building by a lightweight glazed link with expressed timber posts. This part of the proposal will also re-densify the site so that it can

approximate to its original historic character as an urban block. The event hall element is fully supported.

- Replacement gallery building to Mariners Street will reveal its function which is the provision of hanging space. Its design is straightforward and will complement the attractive decorative quality of the part of the Town Hall adjacent to Mariners Street by not competing or detracting from it.
- Front wall of the gallery, along Mariners Street, is designed to appear as a continuation of the screen wall to the new rear courtyard space which connects to the new events space building, and this is an attractive presentation to the street.
- Raised parapet to the roof of the gallery addition will screen plant from public views.
- Ground floor alterations are based upon the significance and sensitivity analysis included within the Conservation Management Plan. Changes to the frontage block are improvements, removing inappropriate, modern interventions in and around the entrance, making the entrance more permeable and understandable for visitors and users. Existing inner courtyard will be enclosed to provide a new internal space in a creative way which enables several positive outcomes in terms of internal connectivity between multiple uses.
- Flank block to Compass Street be adapted to provide enlarged room spaces and/or subdivided to provide ancillary and functional spaces. There are no concerns over the ability of these spaces to accommodate the proposed changes.
- The engraved windows to Compass Street are to be retained, with the side entrance also to be retained for use as a fire escape only.
- Interior of the former New Market Inn will be heavily adapted in terms of its layout and additions. The internal spaces of the building are of no note, with its identified positive contribution to the Conservation Area derived from its external configuration and townscape qualities only, and the effect of these will be largely retained.
- First floor of the Town Hall accommodates the key principal spaces of the building, including the Council Chamber, Chairman's Room, and the Chamber Landing. This sequence of spaces is of the highest importance in understanding the civic purpose of the building and how it was used for over 140 years.
- Council Chamber is pre-eminent space in the building, and it is welcome that the submission acknowledges this importance and retains the sequence of spaces mostly unaltered. The chamber is to be repurposed as a multi-use space for council meetings, talks, weddings, events, concerts, and associated uses. Interventions within the space will be limited to air exchange equipment to support the ventilation strategy for this space, which has suffered from solar gain when in past use, and the removal of the non-historic dais. Retaining and increasing public accessibility to this space is strongly welcomed.
- Supporting plant to the chamber will be annexed to the hidden roofspace above the adjacent replacement gallery.
- A fully glazed roof will topight the new ground floor courtyard infill space, and the existing cellular layout to the flank block is mostly retained as found and adapted to serve as the registry office.
- Proposed first-floor plans show a photovoltaic array to one pitch of the rear gabled courtyard extension, positioned in such a way as to screen them from Mariners Street.
- Principal change to the second-floor relates to the former New Market Inn, with the upwards extension, as already noted, supported.
- The roof plan indicates the new roof form to the former New Market Inn building; the addition of buildings to the rear courtyard space; and the replacement building to Mariners Street. These changes cause no concern.

- The photovoltaic strategy is of note and the Council's advice, contained within the Historic Environment SPD, is for roof-mounted arrays to avoid the principal listed building. In this instance, there are literally no other positions for the arrays to be mounted, in terms of open space or curtilage or secondary buildings. Their accommodation on the listed building can be accepted. It is helpful that the parapet and low-pitched roof design to the front and flank blocks should entirely mitigate the visibility of the arrays from ground-level.
- Principal elevations of the Town Hall will be retained unaltered, except for the proposed gallery addition that will replace the archive building on Mariners Street.
- Existing elevations impart a high degree of value and significance to the building and define its character. They permit the building to be very much read as a late 19<sup>th</sup> Italianate civic building. The conservative approach demonstrated as part of the application is therefore welcome.
- The new Mariners Street frontage does have a curiously unfriendly character and it is unclear why the events space addition, and attached screen wall, are so relentlessly blank. A more visual permeability into the space would have been preferred.
- The design of the windows to the former New Market Inn building are unsympathetic. It would have been preferable for these windows to have a historic character with the appearance of sliding sash windows to the Compass Street elevation.
- Cannot locate any detail for the proposed canopy over the principal entrance onto the High Street. No evident historic precedent for a canopy or justification for one. It would be preferable for this element of the proposal to be deleted, in order to retain the principal entrance unaltered.
- Other proposed fixtures to the listed building, such as frontage banner signage or lighting, are ephemeral in nature and are not cause for any concern. It is reasonable for the building to be able to highlight its activities and offer, and we need to be able to facilitate a way to do that.
- Proposals for improving the internal and external accessibility to all parts of the building are strongly supported, including the physical measures proposed to implement the access strategy.
- Ventilation strategy for the Council Chamber was discussed in detail during the pre-application process. A balance was sought between external and internal impacts of the plant and equipment needed, and a conclusion was reached that managed internal impacts would provide the least harmful outcome. The proposed array of nozzles at high level to the east wall of the chamber do have the potential to be visually intrusive. It is considered, however, that their design can be enhanced such that they can somehow integrate with the decorative scheme in the room once the details are provided at the discharge of condition stage.
- Proposed plant is mostly accommodated in the new build elements of the proposal.
- Sustainability strategy set out within the Heritage, Design and Access Statement is supported. The improved energy performance measures that are set out, such as secondary glazing, addition of insulation, addition of PV panels, and the addition of solar shading, are accepted measures for improving historic buildings without harm to their significance.
- It is welcome to see a specific strategy for windows within the submitted Heritage, Design and Access Statement. This includes the restoration and protection of stained glass windows; retrofitting of main street windows with slimline sealed units; restoration and retention of etched glass windows, with secondary glazing to be added, facing onto Compass Street; replacement of other windows which do not face onto the street with

slimline sealed units. Window strategy proposed demonstrates a sound conservation approach.

- Details have been submitted which essentially provide a schedule of how each window will be treated in terms of retention, modification, or replacement. This level of detail is welcomed and obviates the need for a schedule to be required by condition.
- Proposed addition of external window blinds, as illustrated in some of the submitted visualisations available within the Heritage, Design and Access Statement, is a delightful idea.
- The Heritage, Design and Access Statement includes a brief strategy for repairs to the building. Some inconsistency identified between the brief strategy and the submitted drawings. This specifically relates to the proposed use of Canadian slate. The approach outlined can be supported in principle, but a condition is recommended to require a sample of the Canadian slate for approval.
- Any aspects of the proposal not commented on can be taken to mean that they are not objectionable.
- The applications will preserve the special interest and group value of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the North Lowestoft Conservation Area free from harm, in conformance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- Relevant tests of the NPPF at paragraphs 201 and 202 are not engaged.
- Proposals would meet the requirements of paragraph 197 of the NPPF.
- The scheme will conserve and revitalise this landmark building to its benefit and that of the Conservation Area and town of Lowestoft.
- Concluded that the applications are supported subject to recommended conditions.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Private Sector Housing	2 June 2023	12 October 2023
Summary of comments: No comments.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Economic Development	2 June 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No response received.		

## 6. Publicity

6.1. The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Conservation Area	9 June 2023	30 June 2023	Beccles and Bungay Journal

<b>Category</b>	<b>Published</b>	<b>Expiry</b>	<b>Publication</b>
Conservation Area	9 June 2023	30 June 2023	Lowestoft Journal

## Site notices

General Site Notice  
Reason for site notice: Conservation Area; Listed Building  
Date posted: 22 June 2023  
Expiry date: 13 July 2023

## 7. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

WLP8.29 - Design (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.37 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.39 - Conservation Areas (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted June 2021)

North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted July 2020)

## 8. Planning Considerations

- 8.1. The Council has a statutory duty, under s.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the significance of listed buildings.
- 8.2. Policy WLP8.37 requires development proposals to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings. The adopted Historic Environment SPD provides further guidance on a range of topics including conservation areas, listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets, and sustainable construction and renewable energy.
- 8.3. Chapter 16 of the NPPF which recognises the importance of heritage assets and the subsequent importance of sustaining and enhancing their significance. For instance, paragraph 189 of the NPPF is explicit that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- 8.4. Moreover, paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and

enhancing the significance of heritage assets, alongside recognising the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality. It concludes by emphasising the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 8.5. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF indicates that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of whether any potential harm is considered to be substantial or less than substantial. Meanwhile, paragraph 200 of the NPPF affirms that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated asset, should require clear and convincing justification.
- 8.6. The numerous internal and external works proposed, as summarised in section 3 of this report, form part of a comprehensive strategy to restore and repurpose the Grade II listed Town Hall. This includes extending, altering, and repairing the building. Various elements of the proposals also require planning permission, hence the concurrent planning application under reference DC/23/2049/FUL.
- 8.7. The proposed works have been the subject of meaningful pre-application engagement, and this is reflected in the quality of the submission with the approach taken by the Applicant and project team commended as exceptional by the Council's Principal Design and Conservation Officer.
- 8.8. In terms of the proposed extensions and external alterations, these have been designed to a high standard and would utilise architectural details and materials sympathetic to the architectural interest and significance of the listed building. For instance, traditional red brick is proposed for all new external walls; slate will be used for the event hall roof; plain clay tile will be used for the former New Market Inn building; and natural copper will be used for the roof finish of the lightweight, glazed structure that links the event hall to the existing building.
- 8.9. Similarly, where external repairs/replacements are proposed to the brickwork, windows, and roofs, the selected details, materials, and finishes have been carefully considered to ensure that the resulting appearance is cohesive with the existing character and appearance of the Town Hall.
- 8.10. The proposed strategy for windows is of particular note and sets out that the stained glass windows will be restored and protected externally with secondary glazing; windows facing onto the main streets will be retrofitted within slimline sealed units; the windows facing onto Compass Street that have etched glass will be restored and retained, with secondary glazing added; and the windows that do not face onto the street and do not fall within any of the other aforementioned categories will be replaced with slimline sealed units. In addition, external window blinds are proposed to the south-facing windows which look onto Compass Street. The accompanying 'Proposed Treatment of Existing Windows' drawing provides a detailed schedule of how each individual window will be treated in terms of retention, modification or replacement.
- 8.11. Turning to the internal works, the proposals are predicated on the significance and sensitivity analysis included within the submitted Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP highlights those areas that can be adapted for varying levels of intervention and change, and other areas that should be retained in their current form due to the value of

their contribution to the significance of the listed building. Throughout the building improvements are proposed to the internal layout configuration. Inappropriate modern interventions are to be removed in favour of greater permeability, legibility, and accessibility. This includes the insertion of two lifts, a platform lift, and a number of internal and external ramps as part of the strategy to improve accessibility to all parts of the building.

- 8.12. On the first floor, the significance of the Council Chamber, Chairman's Room, and Chamber Landing are left mostly unaltered, in recognition of the fact that they are of the highest importance when it comes to understanding the civic purpose of the building and how it was used for over 140 years. This approach is strongly supported and will retain and increase public accessibility to the sequence of spaces.
- 8.13. As part of the sustainability and ventilation strategy, photovoltaic panels and plant are proposed to be accommodated on the building's various rooftops. The Historic Environment SPD provides guidance on roof-mounted solar arrays and seeks to discourage their installation on the principal listed building. However, in this instance, there are no other suitable positions, such as open space or curtilage or secondary buildings, for the arrays to be mounted. Consequently, the accommodation of the photovoltaic panels on the listed building can be accepted. It is also helpful that the proposed parapet and roof forms have been designed to entirely mitigate the visibility of the arrays from ground level. Likewise, plant associated with the ventilation strategy would be accommodated on or within the new build elements of the proposal, thereby minimising the impacts on the historic fabric of the building, as well as limiting visibility.
- 8.14. Inside the Council Chamber the ventilation strategy requires the use of nozzles to facilitate air exchange. The nozzles do have the potential to be visually intrusive, however, the Council's Principal Design and Conservation Officer considers that their design can be enhanced to integrate them into the decorative scheme for the room at the discharge of condition stage.
- 8.15. The Principal Design and Conservation Officer concludes their response by stating that the proposals effects on the significance of the listed building will be neutral to beneficial, leading, overall, to the preservation of its special interest.
- 8.16. Historic England has also been consulted on the proposals due to its previous involvement at the pre-application stage following the recently completed North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) project, in which it was a key partner, rather than as a statutory requirement. Historic England's response outlines support for the application on heritage grounds, albeit some concern is raised regarding the treatment of the proposed elevation to Mariner Street, and the inclusion of a pond within the rear courtyard.
- 8.17. Despite the minor reservations raised by Historic England, officers are in agreement with the Council's Principal Design and Conservation Officer and take the view that the proposals as a whole would have a neutral to beneficial impact upon the Grade II listed building.
- 8.18. Therefore, with regards to the statutory tests, the proposed works will preserve the special interest and group value of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall in accordance with the requirements of s.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Subsequently, the proposals would comply with Policy WLP8.37 and the objectives contained within the NPPF.

- 8.19. Due to the absence of harm identified to the significance of the listed building, the relevant tests at paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF are not engaged. Notwithstanding this, even if harm were to be identified to the heritage asset, it would be 'less than substantial' and the extensive public benefits arising from the proposed restoration and repurposing of the landmark building would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any such harm.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1. To conclude, the proposed works would sympathetically restore and repurpose the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall. Significant public benefits would arise from the proposals which would revitalise and sustain the landmark building, so that it can be enjoyed by existing and future generations. Consequently, the proposed works would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, and the NPPF.

## **10. Recommendation**

- 10.1. Listed building consent be granted, subject to conditions.

## **11. Conditions**

1. The development hereby consented shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 18 of the Act (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in complete accordance with the following drawings:

- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P01 Rev. PL (Location Plan and Block Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P10 Rev. B (Proposed Ground Floor Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P11 Rev. A (Proposed First Floor Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P12 Rev. A (Proposed Second Floor Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P13 Rev. A (Proposed Roof Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P14 Rev. PL (Proposed Landscape Plan)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P15 Rev. A (Proposed North and South Elevations)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P16 Rev. A (Proposed East and West Elevations)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P17 Rev. PL (Proposed Sections A and B)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P18 Rev. PL (Proposed Sections C, D, and E)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P19 Rev. PL (Proposed Treatment of Existing Windows)
- 194\_HAT\_PL\_P20 Rev. PL (Council Chamber Service Penetrations)
- 5170-MOM-XX-XX-DR-C-62000 Rev. P03 (Proposed Drainage Layout)
- J7182-MXF-ZZ-01-DR-M-20100 Rev. P3 (Ventilation Level 01 Layout)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been approved.

3. No development or works shall commence until a comprehensive schedule of all external repairs to the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The repairs shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details and any amendments to the approved schedule must first be agreed in writing with the local planning authority before that work takes place.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition in the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

4. No development or works shall commence until a conservation strategy for retained key features (including the decorative encaustic floor tiling to entrance areas; radiator screens to the Council Chamber; entrance staircase and stairhall) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition in the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

5. Prior to the commencement of any development or works, email confirmation of the deposition of the Statement of Significance (Alan Baxter Ltd, 2019), and all of the as-existing plans and elevations, to the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER), shall be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure the proper recording of the historic building.

6. Prior to the replacement of any windows, details of the replacement windows, showing the appearance, materials, glazing type, ironmongery, and finish, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

7. Prior to the restoration of any stained glass windows, a detailed restoration strategy for the stained glass windows and associated secondary glazing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

8. Prior to the installation of any new internal doors, representative new internal door details, showing the appearance, materials, ironmongery, and finish, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

9. Prior to the installation of any banner signage, representative details of the banner signage, including method of fixing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

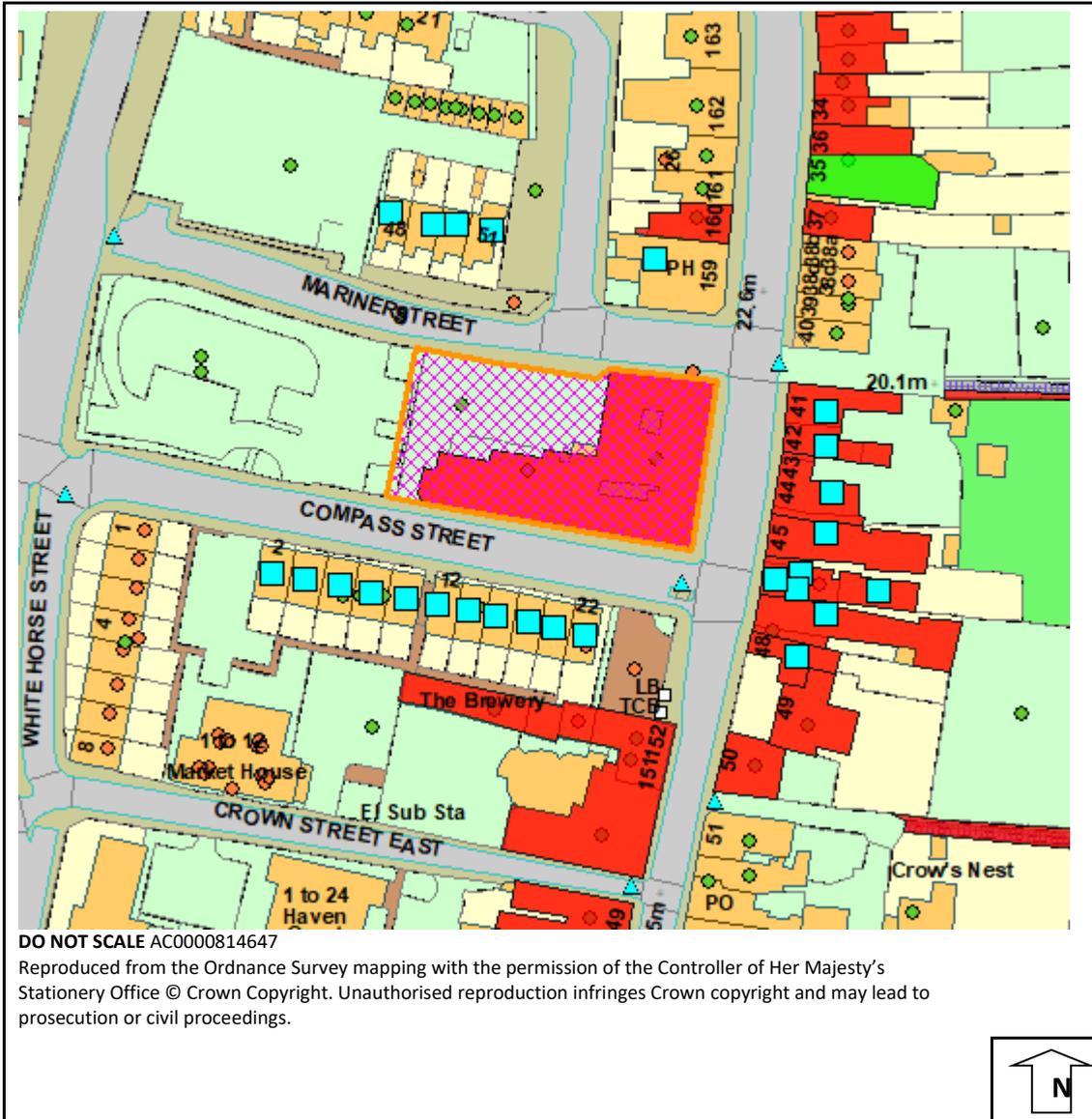
10. Prior to the commencement of any works within the Council Chamber, a detailed design for the proposed high-level ventilation nozzles within the Council Chamber shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the conservation of the historic structure and fabric of the building.

## **12. Background information**

- 12.1. See application reference DC/23/2050/LBC on [Public Access](#)

# Map



## Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support