

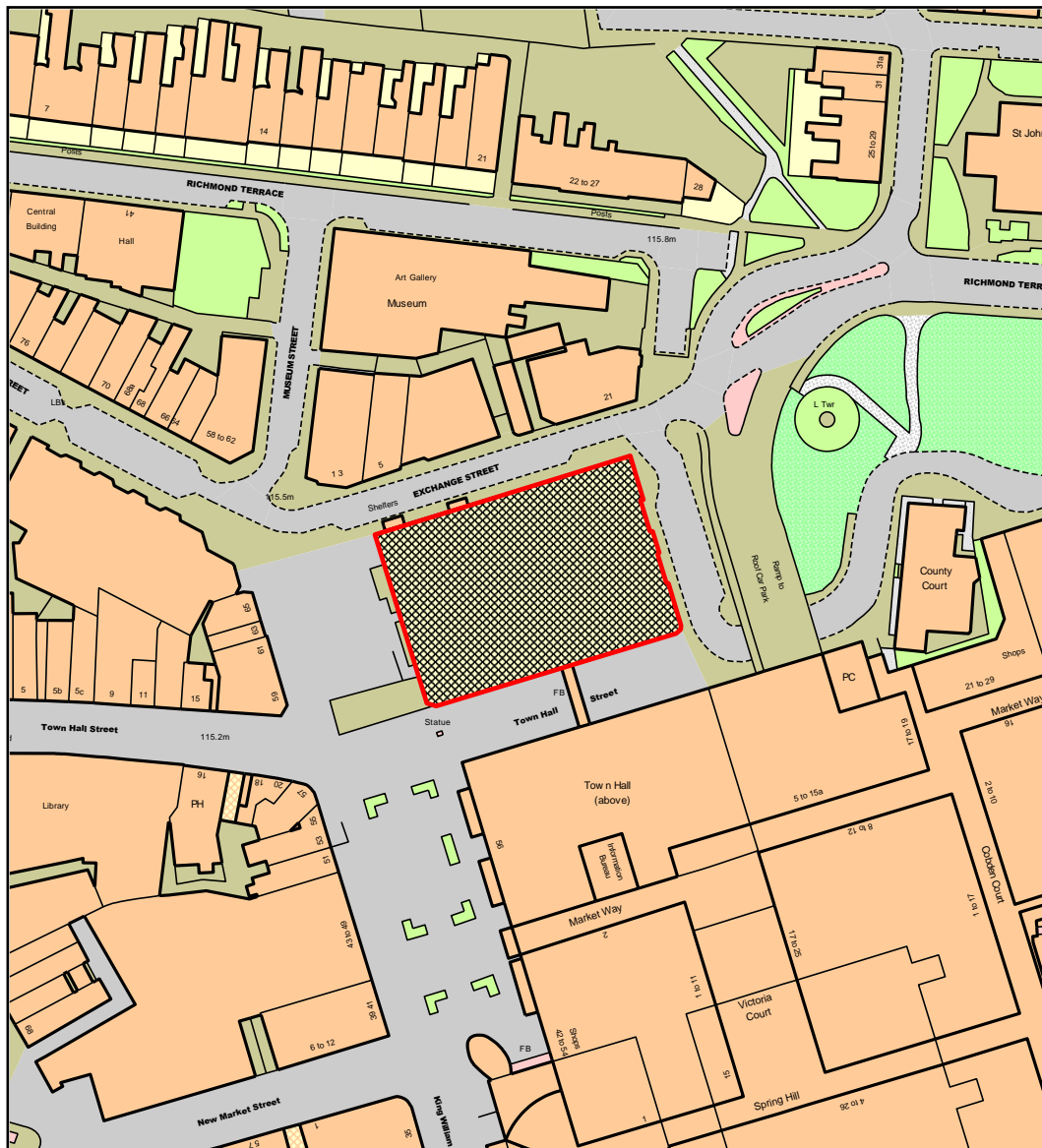
Proposed development: Listed Building Application (Regulation 3) for Internal alterations, refurbishment and restoration of existing office spaces to the first and second floors

**Site address:
Town Hall
King William Street
Blackburn
BB1 7DY**

Applicant: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Ward: Blackburn Central

**Councillors: Zamir Khan
Saima Afzal
Mahfooz Hussain**



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVE, subject to the conditions recommended within Paragraph 4.0

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

- 2.1 The proposal will allow internal alterations, refurbishment and restoration of existing office spaces to the first and second floors of the Old Town Hall, whilst ensuring the historic and special architectural importance of the listed building is preserved and where possible enhanced. It supports the Borough's planning strategy when dealing with designated heritage assets as it is considered to sustain and enhance the listed building ensuring the building is secured for future generations. The proposal is also satisfactory from a technical point of view, with all issues having been addressed through the application, or capable of being controlled or mitigated through planning conditions.
- 2.2 The application is before Members as the Old Town Hall is a Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council site and the application has been submitted by the Council's Property Team.

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1.1 The application site is a Grade II listed building which was built in 1852 by James Patterson. It is a large rectangular stone building with a rusticated ground floor, modillion eaves cornice over the first floor, and a pierced balustrade above the attic storey. The building has stone quoins, round-arched Italianate windows, and Corinthian columns to the front at first floor. The building is used as the Town Hall, containing reception areas, council chambers, and offices.

3.2 Proposed Development

- 3.2.1 Following refurbishment and modernisation of the third and fourth floors of the Town Hall, this application seeks consent for the works required to restore and modernise the first and second floors of the building. The scheme proposes to remove some internal stud walls to re-open the historic plan form of larger rooms/ offices.
- 3.2.2 A number of functional offices on the fourth floor will be sensitively opened out in a manner which preserves enough of the walls to illustrate the original room layouts. Opening the rooms out in this way will allow the offices to become practical spaces for present day circumstances, thereby bringing the Municipal Offices back into use. Finally, both the first and second floors will be sensitively redecorated and fitted out as a modern workplace.

3.3 Development Plan

3.3.1 The Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy and adopted Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. In determining the current proposal, the following are considered to be the most relevant policies:

3.3.2 Core Strategy

- Policy CS16: Form and Design of New Development
- Policy CS17: Built and Cultural Heritage

3.3.3 Local Plan Part 2

- Policy 8: Development and People
- Policy 11: Design
- Policy 39: Heritage

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

3.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Framework sets out the government's aims and objectives against which planning policy and decision making should be considered. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should proceed without delay, unless impacts which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of a proposal are identified. The following sections of the Framework are considered relevant to assessment of the proposal:

- Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3.5 Assessment

3.5.1 In assessing this application, Sections 16, and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 16 of the NPPF and Policy 39 of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan Part 2 are of relevance.

3.5.2 Sections 16 and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission. Section 66 (2) of the Act states that a local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular listed buildings.

3.5.3 Part 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Development Management Policy 39:

'Historic Environment' of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan Part 2 requires, development to, or within the curtilage or vicinity of, a listed building or structure, to preserve or enhance both its special interest and setting. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework states at Paragraph 134 that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Impact on a designated heritage asset

3.5.2 Core Strategy Policy CS17: Built and Cultural Heritage, Maximising the Asset, states that proposals for new development should identify and take advantage of opportunities to integrate with and promote the Borough's cultural assets. Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, Policy 39 states that development affecting a heritage asset will be required to sustain or enhance its significance, taking into account the retention/restoration of historic features and building details and, the detailed design of the work, including scale and proportions, materials and construction details. This underpins the main principles of sustainable development contained in the NPPF alongside the requirement to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

3.5.3 A detailed Heritage Statement has been provided which sets out the key the requirements of NPPF 2019 paragraph 189 which states;

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected... The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance", reflecting the policy requirements include:

- Purpose of the Heritage Statement
- Development Proposal
- Planning Status of Heritage Asset
- Planning Policy
- Context
- Description
- Significance and Heritage Value
- List Description

3.5.4 The scheme involves the restoration and modernisation of the first and second floors of the Municipal Offices at the rear of the Town Hall proper. A number of functional offices and the Members Room will be sensitively opened out in a manner which preserves enough of the walls to illustrate the original room layouts. Opening the rooms out in this way will allow the offices to become practical spaces for present day circumstances, thereby ensuring the building remains in its optimal viable roof. Finally, both the two floors will be sensitively redecorated and fitted out as a modern workplace.

- 3.5.5 Heritage and Conservation colleagues have appraised the submission noting *'the scheme complies with Development Plan policies taking into consideration the constraints of present day office requirements and a finite budget.* It is acceptable in policy terms and a desirable enhancement of the Municipal Offices element of the Town Hall. The overall impact of the scheme will be positive with appropriate mitigation for those details where there is some minor harm to the character of the building.
- 3.5.6 At the time of the application relating to the restoration and modernisation works to the third and fourth floors of the building, Heritage and Conservation colleagues advised that given the age of the building and the potential to uncover unexpected works, a condition should be attached to allow for minor changes which might occur during the restoration process. Implementation of a similar condition, will ensure the scheme is developed in accordance with Local Plan Part 2, Policy 39 and in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. An additional condition was also recommended at that time to require the accompanying heritage information to be submitted to Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the Community History Service, Blackburn Central Library and given this is a longstanding public building it is reasonable for such records to be taken so future generations can appreciate the building. These conditions are duly listed within paragraph 4.0.
- 3.5.8 The comprehensive details submitted illustrate that the scheme will ensure the long-term viability of the heritage asset whilst ensuring the building is sustained and where possible enhanced. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of the relevant policies of the development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the requirements of S66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (as amended).
- 3.5.9 Summary:
- 3.5.10 This report assesses the Listed Building application for internal alterations, refurbishment and restoration of existing office spaces to the first and second floors at the Town Hall, Blackburn. In considering the proposal a wide range of material considerations have been taken in to account during the assessment of the planning application.
- 3.5.11 The assessment of the proposal clearly shows that the decision must be made in terms of assessing the merits of the case against any potential harm that may result from its implementation. This report concludes the proposal will ensure the heritage asset is sustained meeting the policy requirements of the Blackburn with Darwen Core Strategy, Local Plan Part 2, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve, subject conditions set out below:

1. Commence within 3 years
2. Approved details/drawings

3. Any detailed amendments to the design, works or materials shall be:
- a) first approved in writing by the local planning authority;
 - b) implemented in accordance with that approval; and,
 - c) retained for the duration of the development.

REASON: To allow for minor changes which might occur during the restoration process, in accordance with Local Plan Part 2 Policy 39 and in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4. Prior to the start of any building works the Heritage Statement for First and Second Floors of the Municipal Offices, Blackburn Town Hall, a Heritage Photographic Schedule for the 1st Floor and a Heritage Photographic Schedule for the 2nd Floor shall be deposited with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the Community History Service, Blackburn Central Library.

REASON: To ensure that an appropriate record of the historic building fabric is properly preserved.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.0.1. Due to the proposals affecting a listed building and the works involve demolition of modern subdivisions the Council's Conservation Officers, Historic England and the Historic Amenity Societies have been formally consulted on the application.

5.0.2 At the time of writing this report no observations have been received from these statutory consultees and therefore any representations received will be reported within the Committee Update Report.

5.0.3 Public consultation

Due to the application affecting a listed building, the application has been advertised by site notices affixed in the areas to the front and rear of the Town Hall and by Press Notice. The application has also been advertised on the Council's website.

5.0.4 No letters of representation have been received to this public consultation.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (since 2000):

APPLICATION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	DECISION	DATE
10/19/0463	Internal alterations, refurbishment and restoration	Grant	12/07/2019

	of existing office spaces to the third and fourth floors		
10/11/1147	Installation of secondary glazing	Grant	19/03/2012
10/10/0889	Carry out restoration and repairs to external stonework and timber windows	Grant	14/01/2011
10/10/0633	Reinstate two pairs of doors where they have been removed in the past.	Grant	15/10/2010
10/10/0507	New and replacement internal double doors and door closer units to comply with current fire regulations	Withdrawn	13/07/2010
10/10/0019	Re-roofing	Grant	29/07/2010
10/09/0264	Alterations and redecoration to room 104	Grant	20/05/2009
10/09/0249	Modification to existing steps	Grant	12/05/2009
10/08/0880	To renew rotten windows and doors in quadrangle and make good external coatings	Grant	23/12/2008
10/07/1030	Decorative exterior lighting scheme to main facade facing King William Street.	Grant	02/11/2007
10/04/0502	Alteration of public areas - forming 3 new openings to the existing walls to improve customer flow as part of the New Accessible Services programme the Council is adopting	Grant	21/07/2004
10/03/0672	Formation of two new openings through internal walls to link basement rooms B01, B02, B03	Grant	17/09/2003
10/00/0688	Formation of two new openings through internal walls and two openings within window opening onto internal quadrangle, to allow for new extract and intake ducting to re-fitted kitchen on the second floor of the Old Town Hall	Grant	15/11/2000

7.0 CONTACT OFFICER: Claire Booth MRTPI, Senior Planning Officer

8.0 DATE PREPARED: 05 March 2021