

**PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2022

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**Planning Application 22/01325/FUL**

**New public entrance at ground floor level and localised landscaping works.**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 8AH,**

**Applicant: Mr Mike Taylor, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health  
and Care NHS Trust**

**Ward: Abbey Ward**

**(see additional papers for site plan)**

The case officer of this application is Sharron Williams, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534061 Ext 3372 Email: sharron.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

**Site Description**

Redditch Town Hall is situated within the designated Town Centre zone defined in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (LP4). The proposal would be located within the designated Civic Open Space in the Town Centre as defined in LP4.

**Proposal Description**

A new entrance is proposed at the South-West corner of Walter Stranz Square. The entrance would include the construction of a draught lobby with a cantilever end to provide shelter from the elements. The new entrance would have a glazed frontage and grey cladding for the exterior. An orange/rust colour cladding would be used for the interior to complement the red brick exterior of the Town Hall.

**Relevant Policies**

**Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

Policy 30: Town Centre and Retail Hierarchy

Policy 31: Regeneration for Town Centre

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

**Others**

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

**Relevant Planning History**

1979/137/OUT Construction Of Civic Offices &  
Commercial Offices

17.05.1979

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1979/588/FUL	Construction Of Civic Offices & Commercial Offices	29.01.1980
2013/130/RC3	Public art piece to celebrate the Redditch Springs and Wireform Industry on grassed area next to town hall	26.09.2013
21/01619/FUL	Proposed installation of air source heat pump and associated equipment including external buffer vessel	21.01.2022

**Consultations**

**Highways Redditch**

No highway objections to the proposed public entrance at ground floor level but recommend that 10 cycle parking spaces be provided on site for the additional staff / visitors.

**Worcestershire Archive and Archaeological Service**

No objection to the proposed development.

**North Worcestershire Water Management**

No objection.

**WRS - Contaminated Land**

Do not anticipate a ground contamination issue with this proposal.

**Tree Officer**

It is noted that one of the Silver Birch trees could be retained. However, the existing trees are juvenile in age and are a relatively short lived species of tree. Any disruption of the rooting zone would inevitably have a detrimental impact on the health of the tree. As such, no objection to their removal and recommend three Hornbeam species as replacements.

**Public Consultation Response**

Site Notice posted 18.10.2022 expired 11.11.2022

Neighbour consultation letters sent out on 26.10.22 expired 19.11.22

To date no comments have been received.

**Assessment of Proposal**

Members will be aware that there are proposals to transform Redditch Town Hall into a new community hub which may, subject to further consultation, include Redditch Library amongst other services. This proposal is the start of some of the changes required to transform the Town Hall into that community hub.

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The NHS will be occupying the west wing of the Town Hall and use the accommodation as a clinical therapy/counselling space on the ground floor, with general office accommodation/meeting space on the first floor. The clinical therapy/counselling accommodation is made up from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service), and Healthy Mind Redditch services, currently based at Smallwood House. Given how the floor space is proposed to be used, it is considered that the new facilities would fall within the same use class as the Town Hall (Class E) (Commercial Business and Service use).

A separate entrance/lobby is required to serve this facility within the Town Hall building. A new public entrance at ground floor level will be used by visitors and NHS. This separate entrance will enable NHS staff to receive and welcome visitors and direct them to the appropriate waiting area. The provision of a separate entrance would minimise disruption to the Council's day to day operations.

Existing hard and soft landscaping in this location will be altered due to the construction of the new entrance. Three young Silver Birch trees will need to be removed. However, three replacement trees are proposed to be planted as part of the overall works. The Tree Officer has no objection to the removal of the Silver Birch trees and recommends that they be replaced with Hornbeam. This species grows in a column shape making it ideal in this location. They are also a long lived species with low maintenance issues.

The three black metal benches that exist on site will be replaced with pre cast concrete benches in similar locations. The public art feature 'Springs Eternal' that exists in the Square at present will not be affected as a result of the scheme.

The NHS logo and individual lettering for the entrance are shown on the submitted plans. Officers would clarify that advertisement consent is not required for these details.

The new entrance will be located at the South-West corner of Walter Stranz Square. The site is within the Town Centre zone and Civic Open Space as defined in LP4.

Policy 30 requires the Town Centre to be the preferred location for many facilities including social and community facilities.

Policy 13 requires open space areas to be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to improve quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility. A criteria is set out in the Policy and should be applied when assessing applications for development in open space areas:-

- i. the environmental and amenity value of the area;
- ii. the recreational, conservation, wildlife, historical, visual and community amenity value of the site;

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- iii. the merits of retaining the land in its existing open use, and, the contribution or potential contribution the site makes to the Green Infrastructure Network, character and appearance of the area;
- iv. the merits of protecting the site for alternative open space uses;
- v. the location, size and environmental quality of the site;
- vi. the relationship of the site to other open space areas in the locality and similar uses within the wider area;
- vii. whether the site provides a link between other open areas or as a buffer between incompatible uses;
- viii. that it can be demonstrated that there is a surplus of open space and that alternative provision of equivalent or greater community benefit will be provided in the area at an appropriate, accessible locality; and
- ix. the merits of the proposed development to the local area or the Borough generally.

Whilst the site is located within the Civic Open Space as annotated in the LP4, due to the location of the new lobby (adjoining the Town Hall building), it is considered unlikely that the proposal would conflict with the above criteria and would not hinder the use of the Square for open space purposes. The design of the proposed entrance is acceptable complementing the streetscene and would be in accordance with Policies 39 and 40 of the Local Plan No. 4.

County Highways have requested cycle parking facilities. This can be conditioned, and a potential location of this facility has been indicated on the plans submitted.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the development plan and would be acceptable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:**

**Conditions:**

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

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Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and drawings to be defined.

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) Prior to their first installation, details of the form, colour and finish of the materials to be used externally on the walls and roofs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance, to safeguard the visual amenities of the area

- 4) Prior to their first installation, details of cycle parking provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented on site prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability.

- 5) Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for landscaping shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the following:

Details of all proposed planting, including numbers and species of plant, and details of size and planting method of any trees.

All hard landscaping shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme prior to first occupation of the development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To enhance the appearance of the development in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

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**Procedural matters**

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the landlord of the site is Redditch Borough Council. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.