

# REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Redditch Borough Council  
C/O Ms Kate Wood  
Eddisons Barker Storey Matthews  
The Lawns  
33 Thorpe Road  
Peterborough  
PE3 6AB  
United Kingdom

## Grant of Planning Permission subject to Conditions

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<b>APPLICATION:</b>	23/00537/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, Worcestershire
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Change of use from Town Hall to Mixed Use as Town Hall, and Community Hub including Use Classes F2(b) and F1, with associated extensions and works.
<b>DECISION DATE:</b>	27th July 2023

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Redditch Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority grants planning permission in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the proposal described above. This permission is subject to conditions which must be complied with and are set out below:

### 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.

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 following plans and documents:-
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-SI-DR-A-0500\_Location Plan Rev.P02
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-01-SI-DR-A-0502\_Proposed Site Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-LG-DR-A-0520\_Proposed GA Lower Ground Floor Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-00-DR-A-0521\_Proposed GA Ground Floor Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-01-DR-A-0522\_Proposed GA First Floor Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-02-DR-A-0523\_Proposed GA Second Floor Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-03-DR-A-0524\_Proposed GA Third Floor Plan Rev.P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-04-DR-A-0525\_Proposed GA Fourth Floor Plan Rev. P03
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-RF1-DR-A-0526\_Proposed GA Lower Roof Plan Rev. P03
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-RF2-DR-A-0527\_Proposed GA Upper Roof Plan Rev. P03
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0540\_Proposed GA North Elevation Rev. P04
  - Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0541\_Proposed GA East Elevation Rev.P04

Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0542\_Proposed GA South Elevation Rev.P03  
Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0543\_Proposed GA West Elevation Rev.P04  
Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0544\_Proposed GA North East Elevation Rev.P04  
Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0545\_Proposed GA Section A-A Rev.P04  
Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0546\_Proposed GA Section B-B Rev.P04  
Dwg. No. 12905-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0549\_Proposed Site Section (Streetscene) Rev.P04  
Document 12905-AEW-ZZ-XX-RP-A-003-S2-P02 Design & Access Statement Rev.P03  
Document 12905-AEW-ZZ-XX-RP-A-004-S2-P01-CGI Document Rev P01

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 first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for hard and soft 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.

- 5) In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. The applicant is advised to immediately seek the advice of an independent geo-environmental consultant experienced in contaminated land risk assessment, including intrusive investigations and remediation.

No further works should be undertaken in the areas of suspected contamination, other than that work required to be carried out as part of an approved remediation scheme, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, until requirements 1 to 4 below have been complied with:

1. Detailed site investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons in accordance with the Environment Agency's 'Land Contamination: Risk Management' guidance and a written report of the findings produced. The risk assessment must be designed to assess the nature and extent of suspected contamination and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to any further development taking place.

2. Where identified as necessary, a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to identified receptors must be prepared and is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority in advance of undertaking. The remediation scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as Contaminated Land under Part 2A Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

3. The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the re-commencement of any site works in the areas of suspected contamination, other than that work required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

4. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any buildings on site.

REASON: To ensure that the risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecosystems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

6) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation(s), has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
- c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
- d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme(s) of Investigation approved under condition (6) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 8) Level 1 Record: The development shall not be commenced until a Level 1 Historic Building Recording (as defined by Historic England) has been completed in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire and submitted to the County Historic Environment Record.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 9) The premises shall be used for a mixed use as a Town Hall, and Community Hub including uses that fall within Classes F1 and F2(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) and any subsequent amendments thereto.

Reason:- To define the permission.

- 10) The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until 10 sheltered, safe, secure and accessible cycle parking to comply with the Council's adopted highway design guide has been provided in accordance with details which shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the approved cycle parking shall be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.

Reason: To comply with the Council's parking standards.

- 11) Prior to their first installation, the details below 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.

- details, including samples, of the form, colour, and finish of the materials to be used externally on the walls and roofs
- 1:20 or 1:25 setting out elevations for the proposed works, within the context of the existing building, to enable assessment of alignments
- 1:5 details of proposed glazing and cladding junctions, edges and copings.

Reason: To ensure that the character of the NDHA is maintained as a result of the works, in accordance with Policy section 20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the NPPF.



**Ruth Bamford**  
**Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services**

### **Reason**

This proposal has been assessed against the following documents:-

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

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

Policy 22: Road Hierarchy

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  
National Design Guide

Assessment of Proposal

The Use

Members will be aware that there are proposals to transform Redditch Town Hall into a new community hub providing multiple services.

Work has already started to transform the Town Hall into that community hub, with the west wing of the Town Hall currently being refurbished for the NHS to use as a clinical therapy/counselling space on the ground floor, with general office accommodation /meeting space on the first floor.

This application involves the relocation of the existing Council Chamber facilities to the second floor of the building enabling the opportunity to reuse the lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor space for community hub type uses.

As mentioned above the application includes the change of use of the building from Town Hall to Mixed Use as Town Hall, and Community Hub including Use Classes F2(b) and F1, with associated extensions and works.

As it is unclear at this stage who will be the end users of the community hub facilities, it is considered prudent to define the use of the east wing of the building to uses that fall within Classes F1 and F2(b) only as defined below:-

Class F1 uses are generally learning and non-residential institutions and defined in 7 parts:

- F1(a) Provision of education
- F1(b) Display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire)
- F1(c) Museums
- F1(d) Public libraries or public reading rooms
- F1(e) Public halls or exhibition halls
- F1(f) Public worship or religious instruction (or in connection with such use)
- F1(g) Law courts

Class F2(b) uses are local community related and include halls or meeting places for the principal use of the local community.

The site is within the Town Centre zone and Civic Open Space as defined in Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (LP4). Policy 30 of LP4 requires the Town Centre to be the preferred location for many facilities including social and community facilities.

The proposed uses cited above are acceptable community activities that could easily occupy the intended facilities and would not conflict with the existing uses within the building, including the new NHS facilities proposed to be available soon. In addition, the proposed uses would be acceptable Town Centre uses complying with Policy 30 of the LP4 which encourages tourist and cultural activities, as well as social and community venues. Policy

30.6i of LP4 promotes the redevelopment and diversification of the Town Centre by providing vibrant mixed-use areas and enhanced public realm.

#### Extensions

To enable the implementation of the community hub facilities, extensions are proposed to provide a new entrance and an additional circulation staircase. The additional staircase would provide access to the community hub facilities at lower ground level, ground level, first floor level, as well as access to the relocated Council services that will be provided from the second floor onwards.

To provide a renewed presence for the building in respect to enhanced Council facilities and new community hub, a double height glazed entrance is proposed on Walter Stranz Square which is regarded as the most convenient access to the Town Hall from the town.

The extensions have been revised following on from negotiations between officers and the applicant in respect to comments made by the Conservation Officer regarding the design of the extensions. As mentioned above the building is regarded as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and is also opposite the Palace Theatre which is a Grade-II listed building.

Initially the extensions were rectangular and horizontal attenuation jarred with the building's prominent horizontal attenuation features. It was also evident that the rectangular form of the two extensions clashed with the building style of the Town Hall which has heavily chamfered corners. In addition, the elevations initially submitted showed a material dark grey finish with dark colour glazing bars. The architect's intention was to provide a modern contrast to enable the history of the building to be clearly read rather than trying to blend in and devalue the quality of the original with a pastiche.

Officers considered that the shape of the extension including the pronounced upper floor overhang of the staircase, the colour finish of the cladding, and positioning of the glazing bars, clashed with the design of the Town Hall and would cause harm to the setting of the Palace Theatre.

Revisions have been made to the scheme which now shows the following:-

- o A reduction in the mass of the staircase extension.
- o Chamfered corners have been introduced on prominent corners of the extensions.
- o Horizontal attenuation (utilising glazing bars and cladding features) has been carefully applied to ensure alignment is as close as possible, with horizontal attenuation features that exist on the building.
- o The colour finish of the potential cladding has been amended to a bronze anodised finish that will now harmonise and complement the existing building. Whilst this colour has been mutually agreed between the applicant and your officers, a condition would be imposed for the submission and approval of all materials including the cladding.

Although revisions have been made to the scheme, concerns have still been raised by Conservation in respect to the design. The architect acknowledges the comments and potential suggestions made to further revise the scheme, and responds as summarised below:-

- o If the plans were to amend the building to provide further office space or link floors, and the stair core was simply a functional addition then the design may be different. However, the proposal is trying to achieve a very ambitious conversion of office space into a public, accessible and community facility and the stair will be an integral part of this. The contrast in use we feel justifies the cost and design ambition of a high-quality modern addition to the building.

- o In our experience this approach is generally recognised as a suitable approach to extending existing (and even listed) buildings. The modern contrast enables the history of the building to be clearly read. This approach has also been taken at the theatre and to a lesser extent by the NHS with their entrance proposal.
- o The glazing at the ground floor level in our opinion is wholly appropriate and helps denote the ground floor (which due to the topography is at first floor level). This is already denoted by roof features and so we believe our addition provides another interesting detail to further emphasise this and provide a clear break of old and new. The internal space within the Town Hall building will be open to views and light, and when viewed externally the extension will be an illuminated feature particularly in the darker evenings.
- o The design of the extensions represents a high-quality approach which is respectful of the existing building and its surroundings.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states 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.

Conservation harm identified in this case is low-medium impact on the Town Hall as a non-designated heritage asset, whilst harm to the Palace Theatre (Grade-II listed building), would be considered as at the lower end of less than substantial harm. As mentioned above under Paragraph 202 of the NPPF, the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits. In this situation, the public benefits would be making more efficient use of the Town Hall by introducing additional uses to provide a community hub facility optimising the viable use of the building.

In coming to a 'balanced judgement' as required by para 203, officers consider the revised plans enable the proposals to complement the existing building whilst still projecting a modern interpretation. The proposals also enable the optimum viable use of the Town Hall building whilst ensuring that harm to buildings of significance and their setting such as the Palace Theatre is minimised in accordance with paragraphs 202 of the NPPF. The revised proposals are considered to be acceptable complying with Policies 39 and 40 of the LP4.

The new entrance extension will be located at the South-East corner of Walter Stranz Square. The site is within the Civic Open Space as defined in LP4. Policy 13 of LP4 requires open space areas to be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to improve quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility. In order to maintain the levels of open space provision in the Borough, proposals which would result in the total or partial loss of Primarily Open Space will not normally be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the need for development outweighs the value of the land as an open area.

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;
- 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 LP4, due to the location of the new extended entrance (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. 13.8 supports this view as it sets out that where a building is already located on land that is designated as Primarily Open Space, proposed development within its curtilage or immediate surroundings may be acceptable subject to the proposal complying with other relevant planning policies and material considerations. 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.

#### Consultation responses

An extensive public consultation has taken place twice for this application due to the change in the description of the application. Only 1 comment has been received which does not include any comments in respect to the proposals but refers to existing mobility access arrangements between the Council car park and Town Hall entrance. Property Service Officers will be looking into this as a separate matter to the application proposal.

Consultee comments include the request for conditions to cover potential contamination issues should they arise, and County Archaeology Services request standard conditions including a condition to photographically record the interior of the building prior to works taking place. Worcestershire Highways note that the proposed uses could lead to an intensification of the site and have requested a condition for additional cycle parking facilities.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed uses would be compatible with existing uses within the Town Hall, the proposed uses would be acceptable uses in this Town Centre location complying with the Council's policies.

The proposals complement the existing building whilst still projecting a modern interpretation and enable the optimum viable use of the Town Hall building whilst ensuring that harm to buildings of significance and their setting such as the Palace Theatre is minimised in accordance with paragraphs 202 and 203 of the NPPF and policies in LP4. For these reasons the development complies with the provisions of the development plan and would be acceptable.

#### Informatives

- 1) In dealing with this application the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, seeking solutions to problems arising



from the application in accordance with the NPPF and Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The authority has helped the applicant resolve technical issues such as:

- o the impact of the development in the street scene,
- o improving the design of the proposed development.

The proposal is therefore considered to deliver a sustainable form of development that complies with development plan policy.

- 2) The applicant is advised that Cadent Gas have identified gas service pipes and related apparatus in the vicinity of the site which may be affected by the proposed works. Prior to any works that take place on site, the applicant is advised to contact Cadent Gas.

### **For your information**

#### **Appealing the Decision**

If you feel that the conditions are not acceptable you can appeal to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate. This appeal should be made by 25th January 2024 unless supported by special circumstances. The appropriate form and further information on how to appeal can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision> or by contacting the planning Inspectorate Customer Services Team on 0303 444 5000. If you want a planning appeal to follow the inquiry procedure you should notify the Local Planning Authority and also the Planning Inspectorate at least 10 working days before submitting your planning appeal.

#### **Purchase Notices**

If Redditch Borough Council or the Secretary of State has refused planning permission or granted it conditionally, the landowner may claim that the land is incapable of reasonable beneficial use, and for this reason may serve the Council a purchase notice requiring them to purchase the land. In certain circumstances, a claim may be made against Redditch Borough Council for compensation. Further information about purchase notices can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/part/VI>