

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**PLANNING AND REGULATORY FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE**

**15 JULY 2008**

**C6/79/4610/J/CLB – RECOMMENDATION IN RESPECT OF LISTED BUILDING  
CONSENT FOR THE INTERNAL REMODELLING AND EXTENSION OF  
EXISTING LIBRARY INCLUDING THE FORMATION OF A NEW EXTERNAL  
RAMP ACCESS AT HARROGATE LIBRARY, VICTORIA AVENUE, HARROGATE  
ON BEHALF OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICES (HARROGATE BOROUGH) (HARROGATE CENTRAL ELECTORAL  
DIVISION)**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider the application for Listed Building Consent and forward its views onto the Secretary of State for determination under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This application for Listed Building Consent is submitted in conjunction with an application for Full Planning Permission (Ref: C6/79/4610/I/CMA) which also forms part of the Agenda for this meeting. The proposals consist of three distinct elements:

- the construction of a three storey extension comprising basement, ground and first floor levels
- the internal remodelling of the Library building; and
- the formation of a new access ramp towards the front

- 2.2 Harrogate (Carnegie) Library is a Grade II Listed Building having been listed on 4 February 1975 described by English Heritage as follows:

*'Public Library Circa 1904 by HT Hare; a later extension was planned for the east end but not built. "Bankers' Georgian" style. 2 storeys and semi basement. 2 bay front. Rusticated sandstone ashlar. Main bay with 2 giant attached Ionic columns rising from basement podium and carrying entablature with blocking course and centrepiece.*

*Central aedicular window in arched recess with coved reveals, and shell treatment of arch with head on keystone and flanking swags; on window cornice arms of Harrogate in cartouche flanked by seated putti. Wide*

*segmental arched window to basement. Architraved doorway with block dressings, keys, cornice and lunette above flanked by female allegorical figures. Plaque in frieze of main entablature inscribed "Carnegie Library."*

- 2.3 The Library building façade is described by the Architect as of Edwardian Baroque with hints of the 'craft movement'.
- 2.4 This area has been described by the Borough Council Conservation Officer as one "characterised by mid to late Victorian buildings of stone with welsh slate roofs, having generous vertical proportions and decorative features such as bay windows, projecting gables and ornate barge and eaves boards".
- 2.5 As well as being a Grade II Listed Building, Harrogate Library is also located within the Low Harrogate and Town Centre sub-area of the Harrogate Conservation Area which was first designated in April 1973. The Conservation Area has been subject to four amendments since that date. Harrogate Borough Council are currently in the process of undertaking appraisals of all Conservation Areas within the Borough.
- 2.6 The Library is one of some 275 Listed structures/buildings within the Harrogate Conservation Area. Within the sub area in which the Library is situated however all but the Majestic and Imperial Hotels and the Victoria Gardens are Listed. The Library is surrounded by a series of large detached or semi detached (mostly three-storey) villas now mainly in office use located on Raglan Street and Victoria Avenue to the north, south and west. Immediately to the east of the Library are located an electricity sub station, public toilets and a temporary single storey flat-roofed building. Beyond these structures lie the Victoria Gardens.
- 2.7 Although the Library building was completed in 1906, the adjacent Victoria Gardens were originally created in the light of the intention to build a new Town Hall. In the light of the new construction works intended to take place, the north-east elevation of the Library was designed without the benefit of any architectural detail as it was proposed that the Town Hall building would join the Library at this location. However, shortly after the Library was completed, it became apparent that the construction of the new Town Hall would not be realised and at this time the north-east elevation of the Harrogate Library was rendered with a water tight sand/cement render. This uninteresting finish remains intact today. It currently adds little in terms of its visual appearance from Victoria Gardens which are considered to be an important public open space.

- 2.8 This application for Listed Building Consent was submitted to the County Council in January 2008. Since its submission, responses from Harrogate Borough Council, Harrogate Civic Society and English Heritage have expressed concern with regards to the original design of the proposed development and the impact that this would have on the setting of the Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Harrogate Conservation Area.
- 2.9 As a result of these responses the Applicant was informed that the original scheme would not be supported by the County Planning Authority and over the past several months discussions have been ongoing, between the Applicant's architect and the third party objectors, in order to try to resolve the outstanding issues.
- 2.10 The application now before Members in respect of a recommendation that can be made to the Secretary of State is described in detail below.

### **3.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 As described above the application proposes three distinct elements. Each of these are addressed in turn:

#### The extension of the existing Library

- 3.2 The proposed extension can be considered in two parts and in essence comprises an extension to both the side (north-east) and rear (north-west) of the existing Library building. Firstly, the proposed north-west elevation will consist of an extension to the Raglan Street elevation in a style that reflects the historic character and neo-classical style of the building.
- 3.3 The north-west extension will be inset from the rear of the existing building facing onto Raglan Street by 1.7 metres so that it appears subservient to the main Library building.
- 3.4 Within the north-west elevation, stone cladding will be used as the finishing material and the proposed multiple paned windows will reflect the style of the windows within the existing Raglan Street elevation. A sandstone plinth and a string course just below the level of the first floor has been incorporated into the design to ensure the proposed extension appears consistent with the existing building.
- 3.5 The second element consists of a contemporary style of design which will occupy two thirds of the existing north-east elevation, in a rectangular plan form. The extension will rise to a maximum height of 13 metres which is consistent with the overall height and scale of the existing Library building. The roof line is proposed to be flat, there will be no ridge or eaves level.
- 3.6 The north-east elevation of the proposed extension facing the Victoria Gardens however will be of a contemporary design. Stone and copper cladding will be used as the finishing materials. The copper cladding will be

applied to the building elevation to give the extension a vertical emphasis and will occupy the area surrounding the ground and first floor windows. The cladding will initially appear as a rusty brown colour but will, over a period of 15 to 20 years, oxidise and assume the characteristic verdigris patina. The use of cladding is proposed to cover a proportion of the elevation stretching some two-thirds along the length of the extension. The remainder of the building will be clad with sandstone to match the existing Library building.

- 3.7 The windows, within the north-east elevation will be constructed from Western Cedar hardwood which naturally, if left untreated, will over 2 - 3 years will turn silver/grey. The large vertical multiple paned windows proposed in the ground and first floor levels have been designed to maximise the intake of light. The basement windows will consist of smaller arched openings with curved headed lintels above and have been designed to reflect the style of the openings within the existing Raglan Street elevation.
- 3.8 The remainder of the existing sand/cement cladding, towards the front of the Library facing onto Victoria Avenue, including the proposed cladding to enclose the new lift shaft, will receive a decorative coat of external paint in a colour which has not been confirmed. It is considered that an off white/cream colour would be most appropriate in this location which will form a sympathetic elevational treatment facing Victoria Gardens. It is this element of the proposals which for the most could be said to affect the Listed frontage of the Library building. However, careful consideration of the choice of colour of the paint will ensure that the proposals will have minimal adverse impact upon the Listed façade of the Library building.

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#### The internal remodelling of the Library building

- 3.9 The application proposals seek a comprehensive internal remodelling of the Library building on all three levels. At basement level, several walls are to be removed in order to extend the children's area of the Library and to create a larger interview room. New partition walls will also be erected to form two new meeting rooms a workstation store and a server room. The proposed extension will allow for a new plant room, two lift shafts, public and staff toilets (including disabled provision) and a staff room. The offices which are located to the rear of the existing basement will remain in place.
- 3.10 At ground floor level, the open plan Library arrangement will remain largely unaffected and the proposed extension will allow for additional space for the storage of books and the construction of a new emergency access route onto Raglan Street. Towards the west of the ground floor it is also proposed to install a mezzanine floor level which again would allow additional storage space for books and Library materials.
- 3.11 The biggest internal transformation will take place at first floor level where the existing roof void, which was enclosed in the 1930s will be lifted to allow additional floor space and the formation of a light well, enclosed by a glass balustrade, which will allow light to penetrate through both the ground and first floors. The additional space created by lifting the light void and by the proposed extension will allow for the formalisation of work/reading areas an

additional meeting room and for the storage of more books and Library materials. In addition some of the existing historic book cases will be removed and relocated within the building.

#### The formation of a new access ramp

- 3.12 A new disabled access ramp is proposed towards the front of the Library building. The access ramp will follow a zig-zag pattern and will conform with the current Disability Discrimination Act 2005 standards. The ramp will be constructed with materials which match the existing Library building and will incorporate the provision of metal railings which will be painted black and will follow the vertical emphasis of the proposed development.

## **4.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Harrogate Borough Council (Planning & Conservation) – Objected to the original proposals on the grounds that the proposed extension would affect the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area. As a result Harrogate Borough Council was re consulted on 9 June 2008. With regards to the amended scheme the following comments and observations have been made:

*‘1. Although in principle there is no objection to the improvement of this building it is the form and detailing that is of major concern as follows:*

*The proposed design is inappropriate in its context and fails to take opportunities available for improving the character and quality of this sensitive area and the way it functions contrary to the guidance of PPS1.*

*It is considered that the development will have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the listed building and conservation area that would be contrary to Harrogate District Local Plan saved policy HD3 and PPG15. The proposed development of this site does not reflect the style and character of the library contrary to HD11.*

*In reference to Conservation Areas Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’, which this proposal fails to do in every respect’.*

- 4.2 English Heritage – Objected to the original proposals on the grounds that the proposed extension was architecturally un-resolved and hence would affect the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area. As a result English Heritage were re-consulted by letter on 9 June 2008. With regards to the amended scheme the following comments have been received:

*‘We recommend that conditional consent be granted on this application but that before this takes place, the matter of the framing and monitoring of*

*conditions should be resolved appropriately between NYCC, Harrogate Borough Council and English Heritage'*

- 4.3 County Council Highway Authority – Were re-consulted by letter on 9 June 2008. The Highway Authority have no objections to these proposals.
- 4.4 The County Council's Heritage Unit - Were re consulted by letter on 9 June 2008. No comments or objections have been received.
- 4.5 County Councillor Macare – was re consulted by letter on 9 June 2008. No comments or objections have been received.
- 4.6 County Councillor Marshall - was re consulted by letter on 9 June 2008. No comments or objections have been received.
- 4.7 NEDL Electric – Were consulted on 20 June 2008. No comments or objections have been received.

## **5.0 PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

Under Regulation 13(4) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990, the County Council must advertise the application for Listed Building Consent.

- 5.1 The original proposal was therefore advertised by means of a Site Notice posted on 1 February 2008. The original proposals were also advertised in the Harrogate Advertiser on 8 February 2008.
- 5.2 A total of 3 letters of objection were received from the surrounding residents on the grounds that the original proposals did not make efficient use of the proposed internal space and that the external appearance of the original proposal would not enhance the Listed Building or the Conservation Area. One of the residents also objected to the increased use of the building as a community centre rather than a Library and another commented that quiet reading areas should be provided within the scheme.
- 5.3 These residents were re-consulted by letter and sent copies of the proposed amendments on 20 June 2008. As a result of the re-consultation, no comments or objections had been received at the time of writing this Report.
- 5.4 Harrogate Civic Society objected to the original proposals on the grounds that the proposed extension would affect the character and appearance of the Listed Building and Conservation Area. As a result the Civic Society were re consulted by letter on 20 June 2008. Further objections have been received as follows:
- The narrow box shaped form of the extension is unsuitable;
  - The use of copper cladding is out of character for Harrogate town

centre and the library – despite the use of metal panels on the nearby Waitrose supermarket;

- The existing render on the south-east corner is an unsuitable material. We presume that if the original grand scheme, which would have continued with the buildings eastwards from the library, had been completed, this area of render would have no longer existed. An extension should now build over or change this corner to leave no visible render. Render is incongruous for a 'completion' of this building.

## **6.0 PLANNING POLICIES**

- 6.1 This application for Listed Building Consent falls to be determined in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) which states -

*'In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.*

- 6.2 PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) similarly states in an extract from paragraph 3.12 that:

*'It is important to balance the effect of any changes on the special interest of the listed building against the viability of any proposed use and of alternative, and possibly less damaging, uses. In judging the effect of any alteration or extension it is essential to have assessed the elements that make up the special interest of the building in question'.*

The national planning policy guidance also advises in paragraph 3.5 that the following criteria should be used to assess such applications.

These comprise:

- the intrinsic architectural and historic interest of the building;
- the particular features of the building which justify the including in the list;
- the building's setting and its contribution to the local street scene; and
- the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community.

## **7.0 PLANNING AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The assessment of this application for Listed Building consent should consider the four criteria mentioned in Section 6.0 above and the impact that the proposals would have on the Grade II Listed Library Building.

- 7.2 The Listing of the Library building can be seen to be essentially due to the qualities of the Library frontage . Having been designed by the Architect H T Hare in 1903, the building became realised by the funding made available by the philanthropist Carnegie who's name plaque appears in frieze as 'Carnegie Library'. The Library is therefore of great historic interest to the town of Harrogate, the County of North Yorkshire and beyond.

- 7.3 However, it is perhaps relevant to note that the Library itself has not, in the published document by the Borough Council for the Harrogate Conservation Area, been included in the list of a number of buildings which are considered to be of particular note "by virtue of their architectural quality, townscape significance or sheer physical presence". Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Library building is an important element in the townscape by virtue of its massing and architectural detail.

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Particular features justifying the Listing of the Library building

- 7.4 Paragraph 3.5 above describes the contemporary style of design of the new extension on the existing north-east elevation; however, viewed from the north-east or southerly direction, the new extension will not be seen juxtaposed with the Listed structure of the façade of the Library building as they lie at a 90<sup>0</sup> angle from one another. It is not considered that any adverse impact would arise from the building of the new extension which would introduce elements affecting the particular feature of the Listed Building. Furthermore given that the proposed extension is in keeping with the general scale and massing of the building, the extension does not detract from the primacy of the Listed Building façade of the Library.

The setting of the Library and its contribution to the local street scene

- 7.5 As mentioned in paragraph 2.5 above, the Library is not only important in being Listed but is also located within the Harrogate Conservation Area and identified as being an opportunity for environmental enhancement and improvement by the extension of the Library eastward fronting onto Victoria Gardens.
- 7.6 The north-eastern elevation of the Library building was originally designed as a party wall for the proposed Town Hall building and, as such, has no distinctive architectural features. The sand/cement render on the eastern corridor of the Library frontage was only ever intended as temporary feature and, therefore, in its current form is considered to be detrimental to the views of the Library from Victoria Gardens and the Conservation Area in general.

Whilst the new extension may not correct all of the deficiencies in the existing north-east elevation, it will positively break up the monotonous bland rendered elevation by the introduction of window openings placing emphasis on the floor levels within and the cladding will allow the retention of the vertical emphasis of the north-east elevation whilst providing an architectural statement.

- 7.7 The supporting design and access statement, which has been completed by the architect states:

*'As there is no consistent style to the building it was decided that the elevation to the extension facing Raglan Street should be treated in a manner not dissimilar to that of the rear elevation using details to provide some continuity'*

- 7.8 This view was agreed in a meeting held between the Applicant, the architect, the County Planning Authority, Harrogate Borough Council and English

Heritage in May. As a result, the north-west elevation consists of an extension which is in keeping with the scale and massing of the existing Library building and which reflects some of the architectural detailing from the rear elevation (ie eight over eight sliding sash windows, sandstone plinth, and high level string course).

- 7.9 Harrogate Borough Council are not opposed to the principle of the proposed development; however the main thrust of their objection is based on the use of copper as a cladding within the proposed north-east elevation. In all other respects (other than some very minor modifications) the Borough Council considers the design of the proposed extension acceptable.
- 7.10 Copper has been suggested as an appropriate material which would enhance the contemporary appearance of the proposed extension and the appearance of the Library building from views within the Conservation Area and from Victoria Gardens. Copper has been chosen by the Applicant because it has been used on other buildings in the locality and because it would reflect the predominant colour of Victoria Gardens, as it will gradually oxidise and assume the characteristic verdigris patina. Indeed, the Listed façade of the Library, whilst limited in its use by comparison, possesses copper upon a sandstone course towards the roof line of the frontage.
- 7.11 The copper cladding is considered to be an appropriate material given the surrounding context. In planning terms a precedent has also been set with regards to the use of copper in the locality is relatively common especially in public buildings in the town. This view is shared by English Heritage who has raised no objection to the proposals in this respect.
- 7.12 The external appearance of the proposed extension is considered to be in keeping with the general scale and massing of the building and subject to some very minor modifications the architectural detailing is considered appropriate. This view is shared by English Heritage. The extension is therefore considered to be a welcome addition to the Listed Building and would effectively write a new chapter in its history.

The impact of the proposed works upon the local community

- 7.13 The proposals also seek a comprehensive internal remodelling of the Library building on all three levels. Whilst the principle of the internal remodelling is accepted, English Heritage and Harrogate Borough Council have requested that further details (before works commence) are submitted in respect of the following:
- The Installation of all new windows, doors, mouldings and copings;
  - Details of the access ramp and associated balustrading;
  - Details regarding how the roof light will be lifted;
  - Details of the proposed glass balustrade which will be constructed at first floor level; and
  - Details regarding the treatment and location of the historic book cases

This request can be controlled by appropriately worded conditions.

- 7.14 Whilst the works will indeed constitute works which will in effect alter the Building both externally and internally, through careful consideration of the details it is considered that the proposed works are sufficiently sensitive for the County Planning Authority to recommend this application for approval.
- 7.15 In this respect the County Planning Authority consider that the proposed works would enhance the setting of the Listed Building and would also provide an enhanced community facility for members of the public to use and enjoy. The continued use of the building as a Library (the use for which it was originally designed is an important consideration in the assessment of this application for Listed Building Consent. The scheme as submitted effectively demonstrates the Applicant's intent to continue to enhance and improve this important public service provision in the local community. With regards to Listed Buildings in particular, PPG 15 states in paragraph 3.13 that:

*'Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted'.*

In this respect the proposals comply with the general aims set out by PPG15 with regards to the impact of the proposals on the Listed Building.

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#### Other issues

##### *The proposed access ramp*

- 7.16 As described above, a new disabled access ramp is proposed towards the front of the Library building. The ramp will be constructed with materials which match the existing Library building and will incorporate the provision of metal railings which will be painted black and will follow the vertical emphasis of the proposed development. It is important to note that the legislation in respect of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas accommodates the flexibility needed for Disability Discrimination Act compliance. Furthermore, The proposed access ramp is not considered to adversely affect either the setting of the Listed Building or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in general.

*Co-ordination of monitoring conditions*

- 7.17 In considering the sensitivity of this scheme within the centre of Harrogate, English Heritage recommended close co-operation between the County Council, Harrogate Borough Council and English Heritage in the framing and monitoring of any planning conditions in the event of permission being granted in respect of this proposal.
- 7.18 Whilst the County Planning Authority would remain the authority responsible for the monitoring and discharging of planning conditions in the event of Members of the Committee resolving to grant planning permission, it is accepted that the monitoring could be undertaken in co-operation with Harrogate Borough Council and English Heritage to ensure continuity and the successful implementation of the Scheme.
- 7.19 With this in mind, the County Council has consulted with the Borough Council in respect of conditions and a response was received on 4 July 2008. This their response the Borough Council's Conservation Officer has prepared 13 draft conditions for consideration. In the spirit of co-operation with all parties concerned, English Heritage has also been consulted on the 13 draft conditions put forward by the Borough Council. Any response from English heritage will be reported orally at the meeting, should a response be forthcoming.

**8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 On balance and subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions to control the development as set down in this report, it is considered that this development is acceptable in design terms and is compliant with the general aims of PPG15.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the proposal and the results of consultation undertaken by the County Council be forwarded to Harrogate Borough Council with a recommendation that the Secretary of State grant Listed Building Consent subject to the conditions covering the following:

- Statutory time limit of the implementation of the development within three years of the date of the grant of planning permission;
- Implementation of the development in strict accordance with the application details (other than where amendments are sought);
- Submission of amended details prior to the commencement of any works in the construction of the extension to show the string course between ground floor and first floor, in the north east elevation, removed from the scheme;
- Submission of amended details which will include plan and vertical sectional details of a scale of not less than 1:10 for written approval of the County Planning Authority before any commencement of works in the construction of the extension to show keystones will be installed above the proposed segmental windows within the north-east elevation;
- Submission of a colour palette of all materials to be used within the construction of the extension and samples of the proposed decorative render to be used on the north-east elevation should be submitted to the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development for written approval;
- Elevation, plan and vertical section details of the copper cladding to be submitted to the County Planning Authority at a scale of not less than 1:10 and one to include the joints between panels, window reveals at head, joints and cill, capping at roof level and hidden gutter at the base and approved in writing prior to the commencement of works on the extension;
- Large scale details of the changes to the interior including the proposed glass balustrade, the treatment and relocation of the historic book cases and details regarding the lifting of the roof light on the first floor should be submitted to the County Planning Authority for written approval prior to the commencement of development;
- All missing render on the existing stair shaft and left hand end of the east gable wall shall be replaced;
- Elevational details of the proposed reading room and a description of the construction methods should be provided prior to the commencement of development.
- All repairs to the render on the existing stair shaft and the left hand end of the existing east gable wall shall match the existing render in respect of type, colour and texture;
- Further large scale details regarding the installation of all new windows, doors, mouldings and copings should be submitted and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development
- Further large scale details regarding the construction of the new access ramp should be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.
- NYCC - Samples of all materials for roofing and copper cladding to be submitted to the County Planning Authority for prior written approval prior to the commencement of any works;  
Harrogate Library - Internal remodelling and extension - RC/42
- All stone to be used for external walling will match that of the existing

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Background documents for this report  
Planning application case file C6/79/4610/J/CLB

