



Historic England

Mr Mark Simmons
North Herts Council
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DW

Direct Dial: 01223 582721

Our ref: L01580286

14 August 2024

Dear Mr Simmons

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

TOWN HOUSE, CHURCH END, BARLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG8 8JW
Application No. 24/01558/LBC

Thank you for your letter of 25 July 2024 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The Town House is a good example of a late-period guildhall dating from the early 16th century which for most of its history has hosted a variety of community functions including the village school and is at present the village hall. It is of timber-framed construction with an impressive jettied front elevation intended to display the wealth of the community and status of the building. It has also seen considerable change since its construction including major phases of development in the 1850s and around 1910. The building is of exceptional historic and architectural interest as denoted by its grade II* listing.

The proposed works would replace 10 windows on the first floor of the building to match the present timber framed construction and with single glazing. This is something we would support in principle but the date and historic significance of the windows which would be affected is not clear from the application documents. The Heritage Statement accompanying the application includes the listing description, which notes that the dormer windows and other parts of the building were added in the 19th or early 20th centuries. While they are not without historic interest this is perhaps of a lower order than any earlier or original windows and if their condition is poor, as stated by the applicant, a like-for-like replacement might not be contentious.



Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 58 2749 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](https://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Of other windows the information is less clear. In particular, the age of windows FW3, FW5 and FW10-15 and RW 1 and RW2 is not established. Before considering the condition it would be useful to know the age of these windows and of any elements they contain.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development and that protection and enhancement of the historic environment is an overarching objective in this (paragraphs 7 and 8). The significance of listed buildings can be harmed or lost by alteration to them. The NPPF states that clear and convincing justification should be made for any such harm and that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of listed buildings irrespective of the level of harm caused (paragraphs 205 and 206). This weight given to conservation and the justification for harm should be especially convincing where harm to buildings of a high grade of listing is concerned, as is the case here.

We have considered this application in terms of this policy and are concerned that it is difficult to establish the potential impact on the significance of the listed building in terms of the NPPF, paragraphs 205 and 206 as the age of some of the windows is uncertain. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by proposed development. Sufficient information should also be provided to enable an understanding of the potential impact of the development on the asset. In this case we consider further details are needed on the windows to allow full assessment and satisfy the requirements of paragraph 200. We would not support the granting of consent at this time but would like to advise the Council further once further information has been secured.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds, particularly as concerns the lack of information supplied with the application. We consider that the application does not meet the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph numbers 7, 8, 200, 205 and 206. As the application stands we would not support the granting of consent, but recommend the Council secure additional information to satisfy paragraph 194 as described above. Following this we would be happy to advise the Council further.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application.

If you propose to determine the application in its current form, please inform us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity. Please contact me if we can be of further assistance.



Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 58 2749 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Yours sincerely

David Eve
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
e-mail: david.eve@historicengland.org.uk



Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 58 2749 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.

