

DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES



Hitchin Town Hall

Heritage Impact Assessment

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- Grade II listed building
- Conservation Area
- Ownership boundary
- Site boundary

Site Location Plan
1:500

1. Summary of Heritage Impact Assessment

1.1. Introduction and Methodology

Donald Insall Associates were commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council in April 2026 to assist them in assessing the heritage impacts of proposals for decarbonisation for the New Town Hall, Brand St, Hitchin SG5 1HX.

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (2025), paragraph 207, which asks that applicants ‘describe the significance of any heritage assets affected’ by proposals for change. This assessment takes account of the guidance provided by Historic England in ‘Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 12’ (2019); IEMA, IHBC and CIfA: ‘Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK’ (2021); and Historic England’s ‘Understanding Place. Historic Area Assessments’ (2017).

The investigation has comprised historical research, using both archival and secondary material, and a site inspection. An illustrated history of the site and buildings, with sources of reference and bibliography, is in Section 2; the site survey findings

are in Section 3. The investigation has established the significance of the buildings, which is set out in Section 4 and summarised below.

The specific constraints for this site are summarised below. This report has been drafted to inform the design of proposals for the site, by Saunders Boston architects. Section 5 provides a justification of the scheme according to the relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance.

1.2. The Buildings, their Legal Status and Policy Context

The New Town Hall in Hitchin is a Grade II-listed building located in the Hitchin Conservation Area in the District of North Hertfordshire. It is in the setting of several Grade II listed buildings, including:

- North Hertfordshire District Council Offices (former Friends Meeting House)
- North Hertfordshire District Council Offices (former Town Hall)
- Former Library now part of North Hertfordshire District Council Offices
- ‘Chesham House’

- Entrance block at North Hertfordshire and South Bedfordshire Hospital (‘Thomas Bellamy House’)

Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent; development in conservation areas or within the setting of a listed building or conservation area requires local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage.

The statutory list description of the listed building is included in Appendix I.

Full relevant extracts of relevant law, policy and guidance for change in the historic environment are contained in Appendix II of this report. In summary, the relevant legal and policy backgrounds is as follows.

1.2.1. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it

possesses. Section 72 requires local authorities to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

1.2.2. The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the Site comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 has policies that set out stipulations for development affecting the historic environment, and these require that great weight is put on the retention and conservation of heritage assets.

1.2.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The courts have held that following the approach set out in the policies on the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) will effectively result in a decision-maker complying with its statutory duties. The Framework forms a material consideration for the purposes of

section 38(6). At the heart of the Framework is ‘a presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment.

The Framework requires that proposals for change give ‘great weight’ to the conservation of heritage assets (paragraph 212), that harm to the significance of heritage assets requires ‘clear and convincing justification’ (213), and that such harm is outweighed by public benefits. Harm is to be categorised as substantial (214) or less than substantial (215).

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for positive opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets. Proposals that preserve positive elements or enhance/ better reveal their significance, are required to be treated favourably (219).

1.2.4. The Draft National Planning Policy Framework (December 2025)

The draft NPPF December 2025 which has been issued for consultation is also a material consideration, which includes a new structure of the chapter ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’.

Policy HE4 would stipulate that heritage assets ‘should be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance’; it also includes new policies relating to the historic environment.

Policy HE6 stipulates that ‘substantial weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’ and that ‘development proposal which would have a positive effect on designated heritage assets should be approved.’ Policy HE6 also states that ‘important public benefits can include securing the long-term re-use of a vacant or underused listed building and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed’ and that such benefits can outweigh harm.

1.3. Summary Assessment of Significance

A detailed assessment of significance with guidance on the relative significance of elements of setting, fabric and plan form and the extent to which these elements are sensitive to alteration is included in Section 4 of this report.

The following paragraphs are a summary explaining why the listed building is considered of nationally-important architectural and historical interest.

Hitchin Town Hall is a Neo-Georgian municipal building, built to the designs of (Thomas) Geoffrey Lucas in 1900-1, with E W Mountford as consulting architect. To the east of it is the 1868 Workmen's Hall by James Shilcock, with an early-20th-century gymnasium to the north. In c.2013-2015, the North Hertfordshire Museum was incorporated into the site, through a new development that infilled between the Town Hall, Workmen's Hall and gymnasium, and included a first-floor extension over the former gymnasium.

Both the Town Hall and Workmen's Hall were generously sponsored by Hitchin's Quaker community, to support the local community and improve the lives of its working classes. Through this and other sponsorship, the building connects directly to the success of the banking, brewing, baking and floriculture industries of the town. The building has been used as a town hall and public entertainment space in Hitchin for the past 125 years, including for an iconic concert by Bob Marley and the Wailers in 1973. The main hall and Lucas Room are particularly well-conceived, with surviving original proportions and details, such as the brass ring light fittings and mouldings.

The building continues to be highly important for the local community as a public space and as the new home of the North Hertfordshire Museum and local studies centre.

1.4. Summary of Proposals and Justification

The proposals are for the decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall and Hitchin Museum include the removal of a gas boiler and installation of PV panels, ASHPs, new air handling units, secondary glazing, insulation in the roof void and other minor works. The design of the scheme has been based on careful consideration of impacts on the listed building and the conservation area, and attention has been paid to avoiding and minimising harm. The scheme would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the listed building and the conservation area, the meaningful public benefits can be seen to outweigh these harms, and the proposals would comply with relevant local and national policy and relevant legislation.

2. Historical Background

2.1. A short history of Hitchin

Hitchin has a long history, being situated close to the ancient route of the Icknield Way. By the time of the Conquest, Hitchin was home to a minster (a large church which sent clergy into the surrounding area to preach).¹ In the 16th century, the area became known for growing corn, malting and brewing. These trades were aided by the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1850 and the founding of the Corn Exchange in 1851.

Several local economies gave rise to a number of wealthy Quaker philanthropists residing in the town in the 19th century. In 1820, 'Sharples, Bassett and Co, Hertfordshire Hitchin Bank' opened in Hitchin.² The firm incorporated various partners at different times, including 'Sharples, Exton and Lucas' (1836), 'Sharples, Tuke, Lucas and Lucas' (1855) and finally 'Sharples, Tuke, Lucas and Seebohm' (1859). The Barclays Group states that 'the partnership was one of the founding banks of Barclay and Co Ltd in 1896, and another with

early Quaker connections through the Lucas and Tuke partners'. The town became the home of economic historian and descendent of the Quaker philanthropist Willim Tuke, Frederick Seebohm, in the 1850s.

Later, in the 19th-century, lavender was extensively grown in the surrounding fields, primarily dominated by two large firms Messrs. Perks & Llewelyn and Messrs. W. Ransom & Son.

These various names appear within the history of Hitchin Town Hall, as the architects, founders and sponsors of the various developments on the site between 1868 and 1901.³

1 'Hitchin: Introduction and manors', in A History of the County of Hertford: Volume 3, ed. William Page (London, 1912), British History Online <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol3/pp3-12> [accessed 24 April 2026].

2 Barclays Group Archives, 'Sharples, Tuke, Lucas and Seebohm (Hertfordshire Hitchin Bank)', <https://home.barclays/archive-barclays/founding-banks/sharples-tuke-lucas-and-seebohm-hertfordshire-hitchin-bank/>

3 Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, 'Geoffrey Lucas (1872-1947)', <https://www.hgstrust.org/the-suburb/architects/lucas.shtml>

2.2. The Building

2.2.1. Early history of Pound Lane

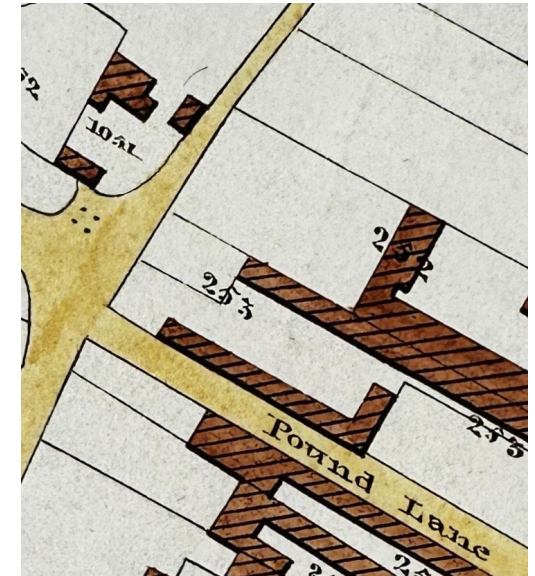
Brand Street is situated on the west side of the town centre and Keith J Fitzpatrick-Matthews has speculated that its precursor (Pound Lane) may have been the western access into the Saxon burgh.⁴ As its name suggests, Pound Lane led to the town pound, where stray animals could be safely held until claimed [Plate 2.1].

2.2.2. Early-19th-century Pound Lane

By 1812, the southern part of the site was owned by George Beaver and occupied by houses and malt yard ('253' in Plate 2.2), while the northern part of the site was occupied by Dr Oswald Foster and contained a house yard and garden ('254' in [Plate 2.2]).



2.1 c.1750 map of 'Brand Street' (formerly Pound Lane), with a single building shown on the north side of the west end, but no other buildings present along the north side.



2.2 1812 map of Pound Lane, with a malthouse and yard on the southern part of the site (253) and Dr Foster's house and garden to the north (252) (Hitchin Museum)

4 Keith J Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 'A Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment of the New Town Hall and 14 Brand Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire', p. 50.

2.2.3. 1840s: A New Public Centre

In 1834, Pound Lane was widened to form Brand Street.⁵ Over the next decade, it acquired several notable public buildings, transitioning from a small lane of little consequence to a widened street hosting several key landmarks.

In 1839, it was proposed by a group of private individuals that a Town Hall should be built to serve the needs of Hitchin. The site chosen was the south side of the newly widened Brand Street and the group commissioned the architect Thomas Bellamy to build it. It was completed in 1840, employing an Italianate style with light rustication and a heavy cornice. From the outset, the hall was recognised as being too small. (This building is now the 'North Hertfordshire District Council Offices'.)

On the west side of Grammar School Walk, the impressive purpose-built Friends Meeting House was constructed in 1839-40.⁶ A couple of decades later, a purpose-built Library was built to the east of Bellamy's Town Hall.

⁵ Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 50.

⁶ Historic England, 'Friends Meeting House', <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102188?section=official-list-entry>

2.2.4. The Mechanics Institute and Workmen's Hall

Historic England describes the Workmen's Hall, that forms the current museum building, as dating from 1841. However, the history of this building is more complex and possibly confused by the existence of the separate but contemporary Mechanics' Institute.

The Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1835.⁷ It was a publicly-open, subscription organisation, which has been linked in various documents to the site of the current Workmen's Hall (specifically plot '253' in Plate 2.2).⁸ The Mechanics' Institute had moved to Bellamy's Town Hall by 1853.⁹

In 1852, the site of the current Workmen's Hall (behind 16-17 Brand Street and also within '253') was occupied by a slightly smaller building (coloured grey to denote a structure of wood and iron), set to the rear of the plot of and accessed via 16-17 Brand Street [Plate 2.3]. This was rebuilt

in brick in 1868 as the 'Workmen's Hall', by the architect Mr James Shilcock, and financed by the Quakers Mr Sharples, Mr Tuke, Mr Seebohn and Mr A and W Ransom [Plates 2.4-2.5].¹⁰ The building was intended to be used for 'meetings entertainments, classes and whatever else is deemed conducive to the combined amusement and instruction of the members' for the 'physical enjoyment and intellectual advancement' of the working men of Hitchin.¹¹

The Workmen's Hall was a separate body from the Mechanic's Institute, the former being a members' -only club, where membership was strictly monitored, while the latter was open to anyone via a subscription fee.¹² The finished building comprised: a hall, surrounded by a gallery, for lectures for up to 350 people; a 'lofty chamber' above the hall, for use as a classroom; a news room for reading newspapers and periodicals; a games room; and a retiring room for quiet study [Plate 2.6].¹³ In-line with the philosophy of its Quaker sponsors, the venue encouraged temperance and an alternative to pubs.

7 A M Foster (edited by Lionel M Munby), *Market town: Hitchin in the nineteenth century* (Hitchin: Hitchin Historical Society, 1987), p. 186.

8 *Handbook to Hitchin and the neighbourhood* (Hitchin: Paternoster & Hales Anonymous, 1899), p. 39; 1838 Rate Assessment.

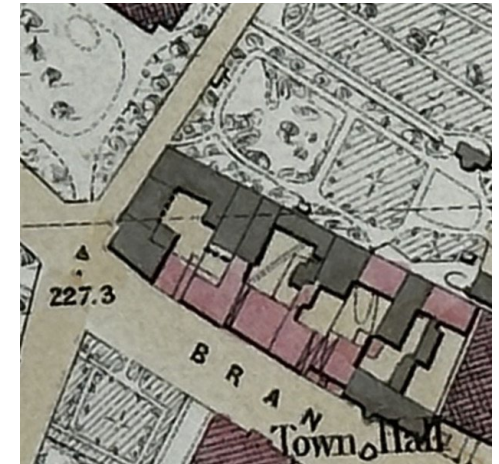
9 Craven & Co, *Craven & Co.'s commercial directory of the County of Bedford, and the towns of Hertford, Hitchin, and Baldock* (Nottingham: Craven & Co, 1853), p. 198.

10 'Hitchin Workmen's Hall', *Hertfordshire Express*, 11 July 1868; *The Builder* (1868), p. 533-34.

11 'Hitchin Workmen's Hall', *Hertfordshire Express*, 11 July 1868; *The Builder* (1868), p. 533-34.

12 'Hitchin Workmen's Hall', *Hertfordshire Express*, 11 July 1868; *The Builder* (1868), p. 533-34.

13 'Hitchin Workmen's Hall', *Hertfordshire Express*, 11 July 1868; *The Builder* (1868), p. 533-34.



2.3 1852 map of Hitchin showing the former timber and iron building in place of the current 1868 Workmen's Hall (Hitchin Museum)



2.4 1881 OS map showing the recent brick Workmen's Hall behind 16-17 Brand Street (Hitchin Museum)



2.5 1870s photograph looking east down Brand Street, with the houses that fronted the entrance to the Workmen's Hall (16-17 Brand Street) on the left, and the now demolished 13-15 to left (HTIM 330_3) copy

2.2.5. 1900-1: New Town Hall and gymnasium

By the late-19th-century, the site of the current Town Hall was occupied by Jelly's tinplate works [Plates 2.6-2.7].

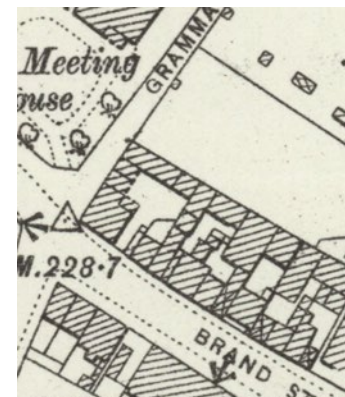
In December 1894, the first elections for the new Urban District Council (which superseded the Board of Health) were held. The Council's creation prompted motions to build a new and larger Town Hall to replace Bellamy's. Many of the local town worthies who had financed the Workmen's Hall were involved through donating land and finances for this new venture: William Ransom, Alfred Ransom, Frederic Seebohm, W O Times and the estate of James Hack Tuke.¹⁴

The chosen architects were (Thomas) Geoffry Lucas (Garden City architect, former Quaker and son of the Hitchin banking family of that name) and Edward Mountford (consulting architect), who drew up designs employing neo-Georgian features, such as a double-hipped tiled roof, red brick façade and large eaves cornice [Plates 2.8-2.13]. The Builder stated that 'the main object was to bring the building in line with such fine houses as the old Brewery House in Sun-street, or the smaller houses of like character in Bridge-street, as well as others



about town'.¹⁵ The east and west elevations of the hall were lit at high level by leaded-paned Diocletian windows and timber casement dormers.

Inside was a large function hall with a barrel-vaulted ceiling over the proscenium arch and stage at the north end [Plates 2.14-2.16]. These were ornamented with mouldings of roses and lavender, the two crops which had been extensively farmed in and brought great wealth to the area from the early-19th-century. A sprung dance floor equipped the space for hosting large dances. At the south end was a balcony with tiered seating and a wooden balustrade. Cloak rooms were positioned to the east of the front door and the Town Surveyor's office to the west. A long corridor ran along the west



2.6 (left) Late 19th-century photograph of Jelly's workshop on the site of the future Town Hall (after Fleck and Poole, 1976, 29)

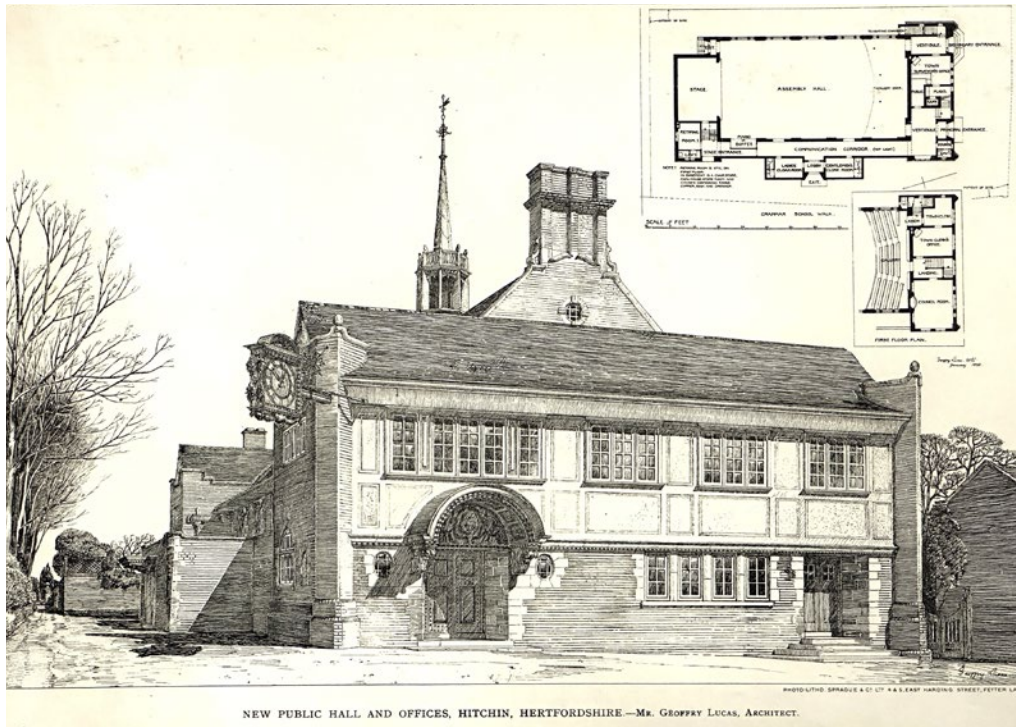
2.7 1897 (revised) OS map showing 13-15 Brand Street and Jelly's tinplate works before their demolition to make way for the new Town Hall

side of the hall, giving covered access to the several doors into the hall, with green rooms and storage to the north, either side of the stage. Upstairs was a function room (the 'Lucas Room'), decorated with plaster mouldings over the fireplace [Plate 2.17]. Early photographs show the unusual brass ring light fittings throughout the hall and Lucas Room.

To the rear of the Town Hall was an enclosed yard with a covered area to the east. Soon afterwards, a single-storey gymnasium with a pitched roof was built to the east, adjoining the north wall of the Workmen's Hall [Plates 2.18-2.19].

¹⁴ Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 9.

¹⁵ 'New Town Hall, Hitchin', *The Builder*, 30 March 1901.



2.8 1898 Initial design for Hitchin Town Hall (The Builder, 16 July)



2.9 1900 illustration for the final design of Hitchin Town Hall (Hitchin Museum, LTS V2B 228)



2.13 1917 photograph of the exterior of the building, showing the leaded panes of the Diocletian hall windows and timber casement dormers (Hitchin Museum, 10691.01)



2.14 1908 photograph of the interior of the main hall with original brass ring light fittings (C Herts Pictorial, Fisher 1998, 110)



2.16 c.1940s photograph of the hall showing the radiator recesses in use and proscenium arch mouldings brightly painted (Hitchin Museum, 10446.01)



2.15 1920s photograph of the south end of the hall with dance participants on sprung dancefloor and the original balcony balustrade (Hitchin Museum, 12673.25, Box KI)



2.17 1930 View of the Lucas Room, with further light fitting (Hitchin Museum, 12673.28, Box KI)



2.18 1922 (revised) OS map showing the 1900 Town Hall with the new gymnasium to the east and adjoining the Workmen's Hall (NLS)



2.19 Photograph of the gymnasium (LTS Vol2B-237)

2.2.6. Mid- to late-20th-century extensions

Photographs and maps from the mid-20th-century show the hall largely unchanged [Plates 2.20-2.22]. In the 1960s the site was remodelled to create a glazed staircase linking the upper floors of the Workmen's Hall, provide changing rooms with showers, relocate the kitchen and form a bar.¹⁶

During this period, the hall was host to many artists and performers, most notably Bob Marley and the Wailers in 19 May 1973. This event still looms large in local memory.¹⁷

Plans and photographs from later applications show the piecemeal extensions and alterations that had accumulated by 2009 [Plates 2.23-2.27]. Photographs from this period also show various changes to the leaded casements of the front elevation, including the replacement of the first-floor central window's leaded glazing (formerly inset with circular leaded motifs). Brent Smith claims that the gymnasium was shortened by 16 feet when the neighbouring supermarket was constructed, although the built fabric does not appear to support this claim.¹⁸



2.20 (above left) 1950 aerial view of the Town Hall, Workmen's Hall and gymnasium, with no visible alterations from the 1922 OS map (raf_541_483_rs_4008)

2.21 (above) 1964 OS map of the site (NLS)

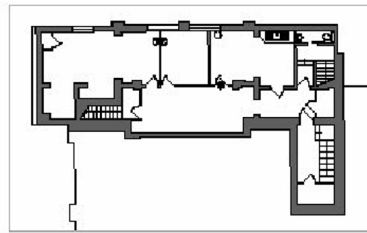


2.22 1960 photograph of the hall, looking north-east with stage in background (Hitchin Museum, 9944.229)

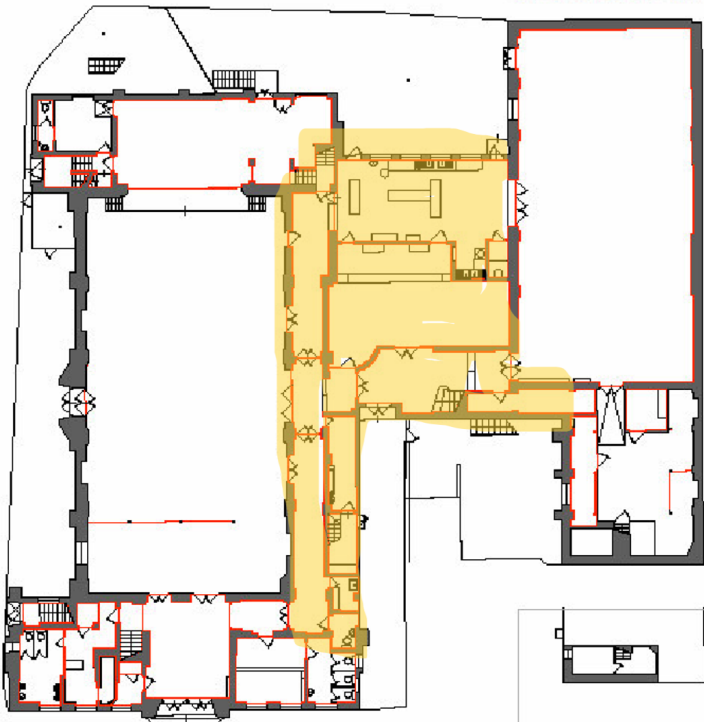
¹⁶ Brent Smith 'Hitchin Town Hall – A Brief History' (August 2011)

¹⁷ BBC, 'Bob Marley: The Hitchin teens who snuck out to see him play', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-68339209>

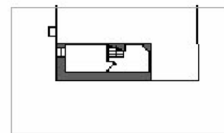
¹⁸ Brent Smith 'Hitchin Town Hall – A Brief History' (August 2011)



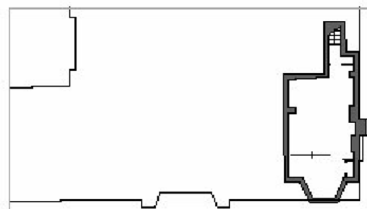
REAR BASEMENT



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



SIDE BASEMENT

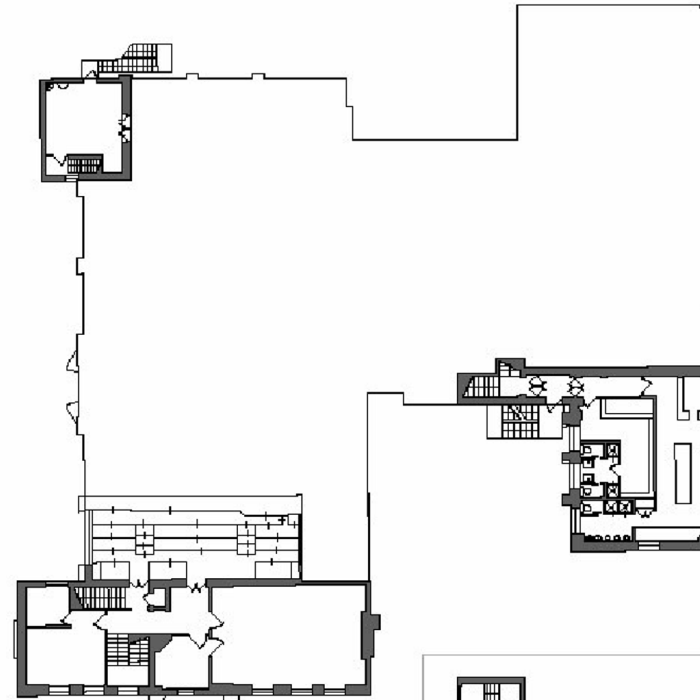


FRONT BASEMENT

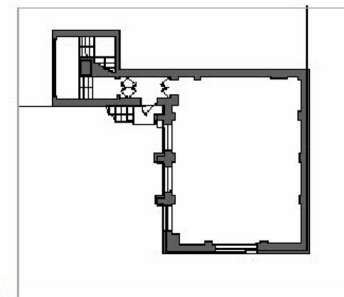
HITCHIN TOWN HALL
Existing plans
Derived from Cragg
Drawing 210/sk01
April 2009



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



2.23 2009 Ground floor plan of the Town Hall, Workmen's Hall and gymnasium showing the various 20th-century extensions that accumulated between the buildings



2.24 c.2009 photograph looking south in the gymnasium (Hitchin Museum)



2.25 c.2009 photograph looking west towards the hall from the mid- to late-20th-century link between the gym and Town Hall (Hitchin Museum)



2.26 c.2009 photograph of looking north-east into the mid- to late-20th-century bar (Hitchin Museum)

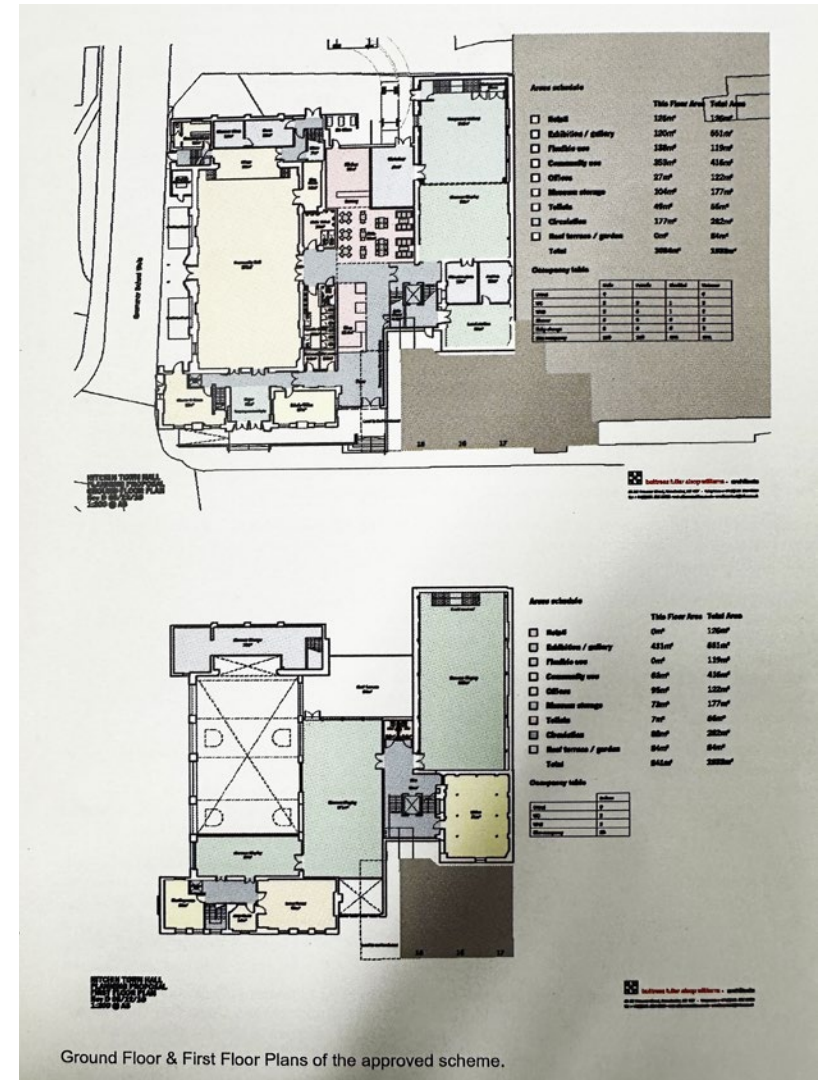


2.27 1996 photograph showing the front elevation of the Town Hall, with window replacements (Hitchin Museum, 2026.11.150)

2.2.7. Early-21st-century redevelopment project

In 2003, the future of the site was looking uncertain, with significant building upgrades needed. It was proposed that the new North Hertfordshire Museum be incorporated into the site and plans were eventually made to obtain 14-15 Brand Street to provide space for a new purpose-built museum entrance and cafe. These new proposals necessitated the demolition and replacement of 14-15 Brand Street, the bar, glazed link, insertion of floors into the gym and other elements [Plate 2.28]. Work was undertaken c.2013-2015. The refurbished building fully re-opened in 2019.

2.28 2011 proposals for the new facilities (Hitchin Museum)



2.3. Architect biographies

2.3.1. [Thomas] Geoffry Lucas (1872 - 1947)

(Thomas) Geoffry Lucas was born into a prominent family of Hitchin- and London-based Quakers, whose family businesses included banking, baking and brewing.¹⁹ At the age of 17, Lucas went to the Royal Academy to pursue architectural studies. Around this time, he came to the conclusion that the Quaker Movement was at odds with his spirituality and renounced it in favour of the Church of England. In 1894, he won the Architectural Association Lecture Medal and Medal in Design. He completed his training with several architects and was proposed as an Associate Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1899, by Baggallay and Stokes, together with E W Mountford (1855-1908). He travelled extensively to visit and record vernacular and ecclesiastical buildings.

At the age of 23, he opened his own architectural practice in his home-town of Hitchin. In 1901, he founded the Hitchin Society of Arts and Letters to safeguard and record buildings facing demolition.

He continued to design houses locally, along with the landmark Hitchin Town Hall. After this, he became heavily involved in the Garden City Movement, and was admired by the Garden City architect Raymond Unwin for his attention to and inspiration from traditional English architecture: 'the group of houses by Geoffry Lucas which illustrates all the carefulness, subtlety, elegance and stylishness of this glorious period of architecture.'²⁰ Ecclesiastical work also featured highly in his opus, creating a startling contrast to his vernacular-inspired 'cottages' and villas.

Towards the end of his life, he became more interested in the archaeological and antiquarian side of church buildings and was a member of the Society of Antiquaries. He died in 1947.

2.3.2. Edward William Mountford (1855-1908)

Edward William Mountford was born in Shipston-on-Stour in Warwickshire, growing up in the Cotswolds. He entered into practice on his own account in 1881 and worked primarily on public buildings and churches.

Mountford's breakthrough was winning the competition for the designs of the palatial Baroque Sheffield Town Hall (1890-97), Battersea Central Library (1889-1890), the Battersea Polytechnic Institute (1891) and the Battersea Town Hall (1891-1893). This cemented his reputation for designing substantial public buildings and, especially, town halls. Following this, he won the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales (1900-1907) and Lancaster Town Hall (1906-1909). Mountford is seen as one of the initiators of the Wrenaissance style of Baroque Revival architecture which characterises many British and Empire public buildings during the Edwardian era, and was later awarded a silver medal at the Exposition Universelle (1900).

He partnered up with many other key artists and designers of the early 20th-century including Gertrude Jeckyll and Edwin Lutyens on Munstead Wood and Munstead Grange, as well as working alongside architectural sculptors Paul Montford (on Battersea Town Hall), F. W. Pomeroy, and Gilbert Seale, and with muralist Gerald Moira and the Arts and Crafts exponent William Richmond.

He held various architectural committee positions, including President of the Architectural Association and on the council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, allowing him to shape the profession during his lifetime.

¹⁹ Jacqueline Barnett, 'Geoffry Lucas (1872 - 1947)', *Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust*, <https://www.hgsttrust.org/the-suburb/architects/lucas.shtml#2>

²⁰ Gavin Stamp, 'Exhibition on London Buildings 1890-1914' at the RIBA Heinz Gallery, *House and Garden*, vol 33 (June 1978), p. 74-75.

2.4. Relevant Planning History

20/02371/LBC

Replace existing wood floor to Hitchin Town Hall using solid oak floor planks secret nailed/ glued to new hardwood support battens.

Conditional consent 18 Dec 2020

15/01940/1AD

Erection of sign to frontage of museum

Conditional consent 27 Aug 2015

14/01633/1LB

Internal alterations forming part of the services installation relating to the refurbishment and extension of the Town Hall (as amended and amplified by drawing nos. (06)002C2, (06)004C2, (24)002C2 & (45)010C1, revised Design and Access statement, Supplementary Planning Statement and manufacturers information re modern services installations (received 16th and 17th July 2104).

Condition 2- Details of the painting and decoration finishes to the boxing in of the services to the perimeter of the foyer ceiling, metal conduit to west wall of the Mountford Hall, boxing in of the ventilation equipment above the Mountford Hall gallery and the stage plenum (as discharge

of condition attached to listed building ref 14/01633/1LB granted consent 18th August 2014)

Condition 4 - Details of the coving and cornice treatment to the boxing in of the services, together with the pipework and supports to the warm air curtains in the entrance foyer of the Town Hall (discharge of condition attached to listed building ref 14/01633/1LB granted consent 18th August 2014)

Condition 4 - Details of colour scheme for re-painting of Mountford Hall and the Lucas Room (as discharge of condition attached to listed building ref 12/02797/1LB granted consent 26/02/2013)

Condition 5- Details of the access and maintenance hatches to the boxed in services in the entrance foyer (discharge of condition attached to listed building ref 14/01633/1LB granted consent 18th August 2014)

Condition 6 - Retention and re-use of doors and ironmongery (as discharge of condition attached to listed building ref 12/02797/1LB granted consent 26/02/2013)

Condition 7: Detailed drawings, including sections, to show the appearance of any repaired or replaced windows in the Town Hall and Working Mens Hall shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the

commencement of that part of the works hereby approved. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (as a discharge of condition 7 of planning permission ref: 12/02797/1LB granted 26th February 2013)

Condition 8: Prior to the commencement of the relevant phase of the development detailed drawings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority relating to the following works: the balustrading to the roof terrace and Mountford Hall balcony external metal cladding to the gymnasium extension glazed screen to the front of the entrance foyer infill extension

Conditional consent 18 Aug 2014

13/00066/1CAC

Demolition of two-storey shop buildings at numbers 14 and 15 Brand Street

Conditional consent 26 Feb 2013

12/02796/1

Erection of two storey glazed entrance and link structure; roof terrace with glazed balustrade. Addition of first floor including provision of roof top plant equipment to facilitate change of use of gymnasium (Class D2) and associated changing facilities, store and activity room to museum (Class D1). Internal alterations to existing buildings

to provide cafe, shop, display area and ancillary facilities. Rear staircase and refuse enclosure and alteration to existing steps to provide disabled access to Town Hall. (as amended by plan nos. PL01B; PL02A; PL03A; PL04A & PL06A received 26th January 2013)

Condition 3 - Materials (as discharge of condition attached to planning reference 12/02796/1 granted permission on 26/02/2013)

Condition 3 - Details of additional skin of brickwork (as discharge of condition attached to conservation area consent 13/00066/1CAC granted consent on 26/02/2013)

Condition 4 - Archaeology (as discharge of condition attached to planning reference 12/02796/1 granted permission on 26/02/2013)

Condition 7 - Noise Survey (as discharge of condition attached to planning reference 12/02796/1 granted permission on 26/02/2013)

Condition 9 - Details of fascia/soffit construction on front extension (as discharge of condition attached to planning reference 12/02797/1LB granted consent on 26/02/2013)

Condition 15 - Details of fascia/soffit construction on front extension (as discharge of condition attached to planning reference 12/02796/1 granted permission on 26/02/2013)

Conditional permission 26 Feb 2013

12/02797/1LB

Erection of two-storey glazed entrance and link structure, roof terrace with glazed balustrade and flank wall to No. 16 Brand Street. Addition of first floor including provision of roof top plant equipment to facilitate change of use of gymnasium (D2) and associated changing facilities, store and activity room to museum (D1). Internal alterations to existing buildings to provide cafe, display are and ancillary facilities including alterations to layout of toilets and kitchen area. Inside existing Town Hall building provision of lift, alterations to stage to creat museum storage. Alterations to first floor balcony with new floor, glass balustrade and new access way replacing existing window opening. Alterations to stepped access to Town Hall.

Conditional consent 26 Feb 2013

11/00267/1LB

Erection of two-storey glazed entrance and link structure including new staircase and lift, roof terrace with glazed balustrade and flank wall to number 15 Brand Street. Addition of first floor including provision of roof top plant equipment to facilitate change of use of gymnasium (D2) and associated changing facilities, store and activity room to museum (D1). Internal alterations to existing buildings to

provide cafe, display area and ancillary facilities including alterations to layout of toilets and kitchen area. Inside existing Town Hall building provision of lift, alterations to stage to create museum storage. Alterations to first floor balcony with new floor, glass balustrade and new access way replacing existing window opening. Provision of ramped and stepped access to principal elevation of Town Hall.

Conditional consent 18 Mar 2011

11/00171/1

Erection of two-storey glazed entrance and link structure; roof terrace with glazed balustrade; first floor side extension and flank wall to number 15 Brand Street following demolition of number 14 Brand Street. Addition of first floor including provision of roof top plant equipment to facilitate change of use of gymnasium (D2) and associated changing facilities, store and activity room to museum (D1). Internal alterations to existing buildings to provide cafe, display area and ancillary facilities. Provision of ramped and stepped access to principal elevation of Town Hall. Application as amended by drawing nos. 7037/04/004A, 7037/24/002A, amplified by drawing no. 7-37/06/010 and amended Design and Access statement 23/2/11.

Conditional permission 18 Mar 2011

11/00268/1CAC

Demolition of two-storey shop building at number 14 Brand Street and demolition of rear extension of number 15 Brand Street

Conditional consent 18 Mar 2011

2.5. Sources and Bibliography

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Hitchin Museum and Local Studies

Historic England Archives

Barclays Group Archives

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Foster, A. M. (edited by Lionel M Munby). *Market town: Hitchin in the nineteenth century* (Hitchin: Hitchin Historical Society, 1987)

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. 'Geoffrey Lucas (1872-1947)', <https://www.hgstrust.org/the-suburb/architects/lucas.shtml>

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3. Site Survey Descriptions

3.1. The Setting of the Building and the Conservation Area Context

The site stands on the north side of Brand Street, a busy street serving the Hitchin one-way traffic system. The street is characterised by its 19th-century public buildings, including the 1840 Old Town Hall and 1860 Library [Plates 3.1-3.2]. However, this has also been infilled with much modern red brick development, particularly the supermarket and multi-storey Brand Street Car Park.

To the west is a traffic junction, beyond which are the former 1840 Friends Meeting House (which is partially screened by mature trees and surrounded by car parking), the current (unlisted) Friends Meeting House, and early- to mid-19th-century entrance block at North Hertfordshire and South Bedfordshire hospital [Plates 3.3-3.5]. To the north of the site is a modern block of flats ('Croft Court') and further car parking [Plates 3.6-3.7]. The site is bounded to the east by the multi-storey Brand Street Car Park.



3.1 Looking east down Brand Street towards the old 1840 Town Hall and library



3.2 Looking west along Brand Street, with the large modern supermarket on the plot adjacent to 16-17 Brand Street



3.3 Looking east from junction towards the 1900-1 Town Hall



3.4 Looking south-west across the junction from the 1900-1 Town Hall towards the current Friends Meeting House



3.5 Looking north-east across the car park towards the 1900-1 Town Hall and 1840 former Friends Meeting House



3.6 Looking north towards modern flats to rear of 1900-1 Town Hall



3.7 Looking east towards high-level car park to east of museum

3.2. The Building

Hitchin Town Hall is a Neo-Georgian municipal building, built to the designs of (Thomas) Geoffry Lucas in 1900-1, with E W Mountford as consulting architect. To the east of it is the 1868 Workmen's Hall by James Shilcock, with an early-20th-century gymnasium to the north. In c.2013-2015, the North Hertfordshire Museum was incorporated into the site, through a new development that infilled between the Town Hall, Workmen's Hall and gymnasium, and included a first-floor extension over the former gymnasium.

3.3. The Building Externally

3.3.1. South (Front) Elevation

The front elevation draws on the styles of the early-18th century, with a brick façade enriched with stone quoins, a deep modillion eaves cornice and double-hipped, tiled roof [Plate 3.8]. This is largely unchanged from the original plans, except for the replacement of the ground-floor and central first-floor leaded casements. This early-18th century style façade is combined with a more Classical-style central projecting bay, flanked by two stone pilasters, infilled with painted pebbledash and surmounted with a pediment. The building's main access is via a wide arch with keystone, leading to a recessed pair of double doors with overhead. While the roof has lost the central and west chimneystack (giving it an asymmetric and lop-sided look), it retains the east chimney stack and central cupola.

To the east of this is the c.2013-15 North Hertfordshire Museum entrance. Meanwhile, hidden behind the street frontage of 16-17 Brand Street is the brick gable of the 1868 Workmen's Hall, with burnt header diaper work and a modern uPVC double-glazed windows inserted under a rubbed brick, arched lintel [Plate 3.9]. The roof is formed of a half-hipped slated gablet, with nogging work along the eaves.



3.8 Front elevation of the 1900-1 Town Hall and modern museum



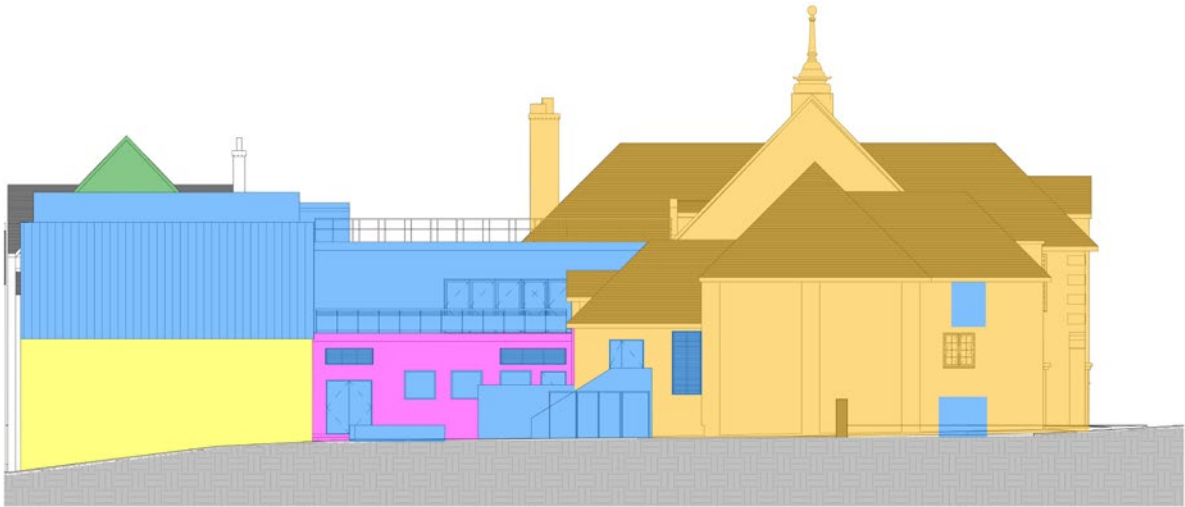
3.9 South elevation of the 1868 Workmen's Hall

Front and Rear Elevations with phasing



1 Existing Front Elevation
1:100

- 1868 (Shilcock)
- 1900-1 (Lucas and Mountford)
- Early-20th-century
- Mid- to late-20th-century
- c.2013-15
- Modern glazing/doors



2 Existing Rear Elevation
1:100

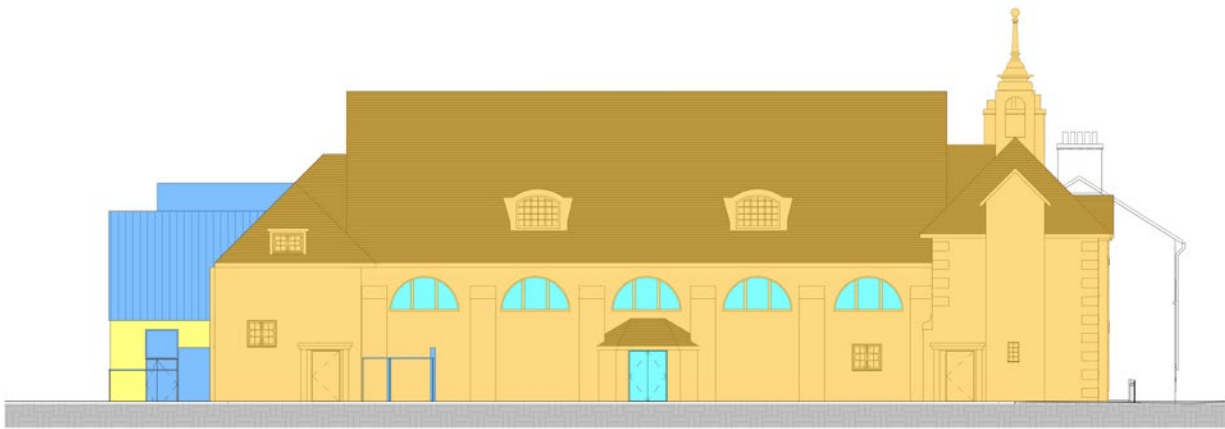
3.3.2. West (Return) Elevation

The west elevation is dominated by the external façade of the hall [Plates 3.10-3.12]. This is lit by high-level Diocletian windows (original pegged frames but modern glazing), original timber casement dormers (hung with tiles) and a small original casement to light the area under the balcony. While the lower part of the wall is faced in red brick, the upper part is painted pebble dash, reminiscent of Lucas's other work with domestic Garden City architecture. The Diocletian windows are interleaved with brick buttresses. A central double doorway, flanked by decorative stone quoins, gives direct access to the hall.

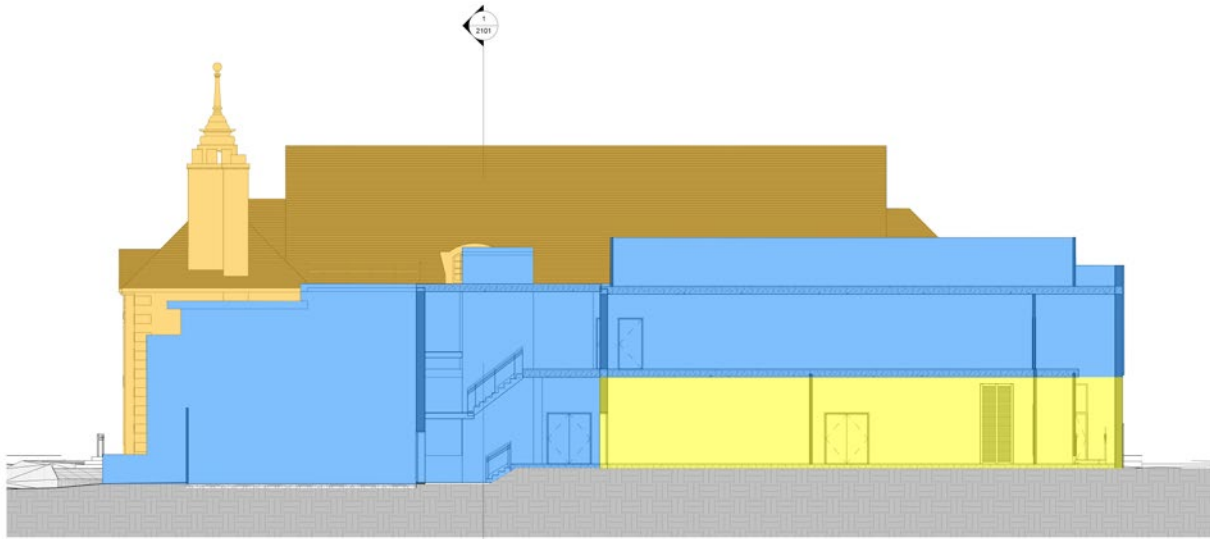
To the south of this is the projecting end of the front range, with more decorative stone quoins, a projecting truncated chimneystack and original door within porch (formerly giving access to a stair to the gallery but now into a ground-floor room) [Plate 3.13]. A small window is incongruently set into the chimneystack, although stylistically appears to be original [Plate 3.14]. The north elevation of this front range is lit at first floor by an original leaded cross-window and accessed at ground -floor level via a modern door within an enlarged former window opening [Plate 3.15]. A small buttress on the north-west corner is topped by a decorative swans-neck pediment.

To the north is the projecting end of the stage range. This is comparatively plain and lit by simple timber casements with plain soldier course lintels. At ground floor, it is accessed via an original door set within a similar doorway and porch to its southern counterpart. A plaque above the doorway announces that 'This portion of the Hitchen New Town Hall is built upon land once the property and garden of Doctor Oswald Foster for many years a very esteemed inhabitant of this town' [Plate 3.16]. On the south elevation of this projection is electric plant behind fencing, with another plain timber casement above [Plate 3.17].

Side Elevations with phasing



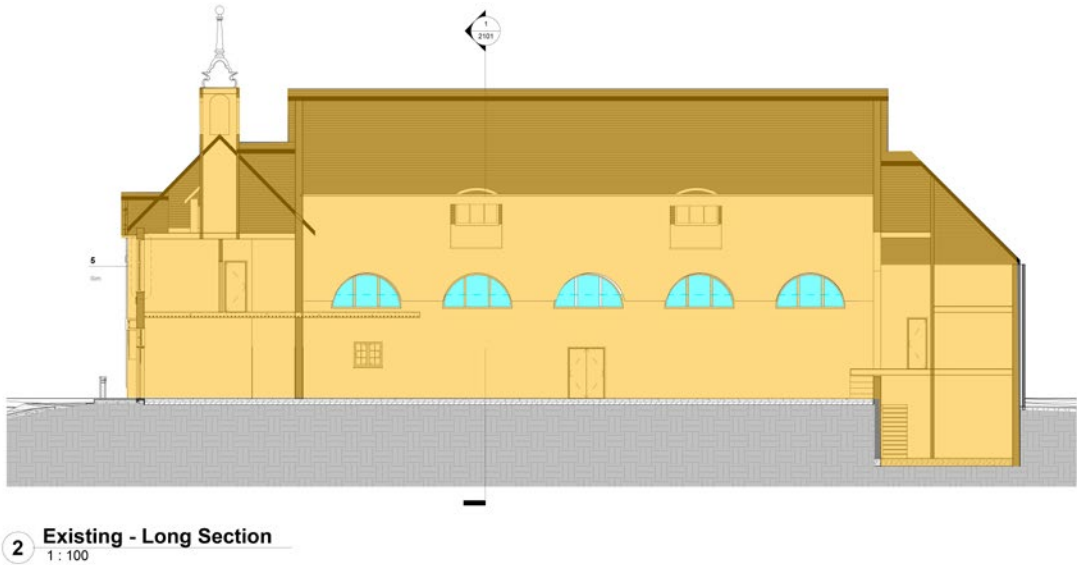
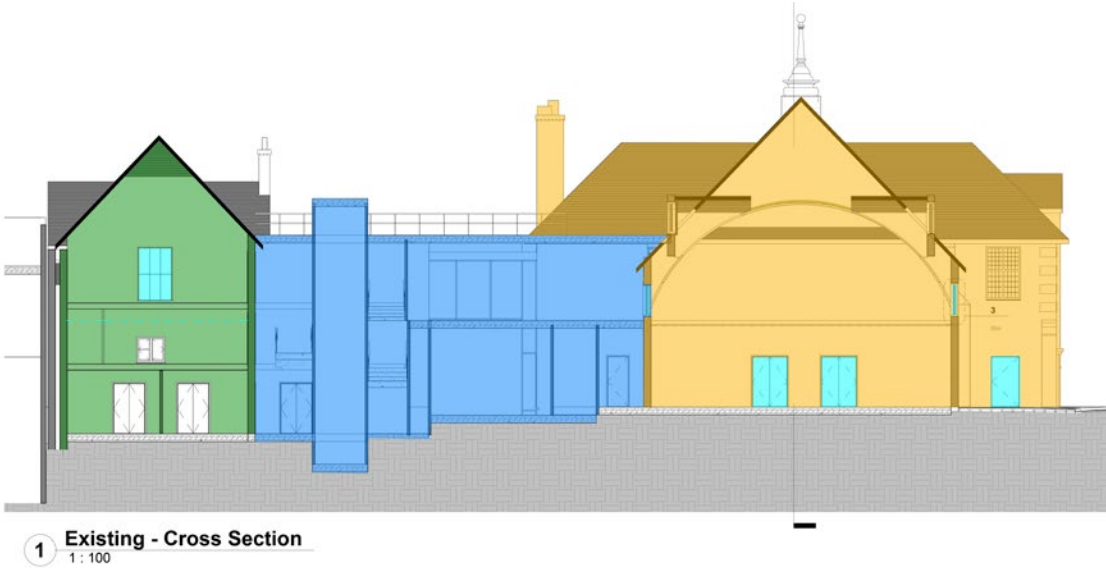
1 Existing West Elevation
1:100



2 Existing East Section
1:100

- 1868 (Shilcock)
- 1900-1 (Lucas and Mountford)
- Early-20th-century
- Mid- to late-20th-century
- c.2013-15
- Modern glazing/doors

Sections with phasing



- 1868 (Shilcock)
- 1900-1 (Lucas and Mountford)
- Early-20th-century
- Mid- to late-20th-century
- c.2013-15
- Modern glazing/doors



3.10 North end of west elevation



3.11 Central section of west elevation (hall)



3.12 South end of west elevation



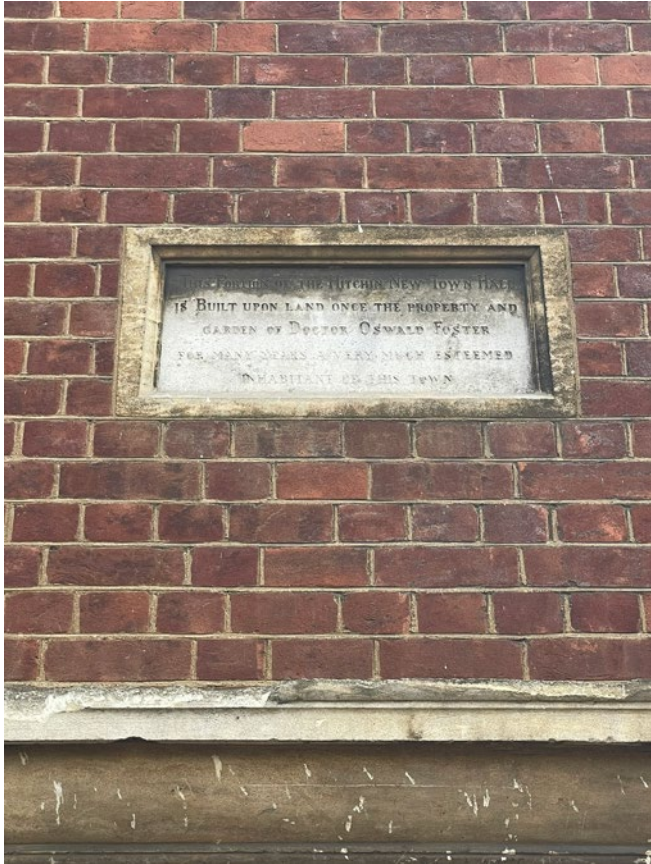
3.13 Door in west elevation to front range



3.14 Detail of window in chimneystack of west elevation of front range



3.15 North elevation of projecting front range



3.16 Detail of donor plaque



3.17 South elevation of projecting wings of stage

3.3.3. North (Rear) Elevations

The north elevation is the service area of the building and has undergone many alterations. The original elevations of the 1900-1 stage area appears to have undergone the least changes (except for the infilling of a window and a new external brick staircase), and has some decorative cast iron rainwater goods [Plates 3.18-3.19 and 3.22].

The early-20th-century red brick gym to the east was substantially adapted for use as dedicated museum galleries c.2013-15, necessitating the blocking of its windows and an additional modern storey being added [Plates 3.20-3.21]. The infill between the former gym and Town Hall is modern.



3.18 Looking at the west end of the north elevation (rear of stage)



3.19 Looking at the east elevation of the stage end of the hall



3.20 Looking at the central part of the north elevation



3.21 Looking at the east end of the north elevation, comprising the former early 20th-century gym and modern first-floor museum extension

3.3.4. Roof

1900-1 Town Hall

The Town Hall roof is covered in red tiles, and lit by dormer windows with original timber casements [Plates 3.22-3.24].

3.3.4.1. 1868 Workmen's Hall

The Workmen's Hall is covered in slates, inset with modern conservation rooflights. To the east, it is bounded by security fencing [Plates 3.25-3.27].

3.3.4.2. Early-20th-century gym

The former gym has a first-floor 2013 extension with flat roof. This contains plant [Plate 3.28].

3.3.4.3. Modern museum extension

The c.2013-15 museum extension has a flat roof with extensive plant, abutting the roofs of the older roofs (see Plates 3.22-23).



3.22 Town Hall roof seen across modern former gym flat roof



3.23 South end of Town Hall roof from museum extension flat roof



3.24 Detail of 1900-1 dormers



3.25 Looking south at the east pitch of the Workmen's Hall



3.26 Looking east at the west pitch of the Workmen's Hall



3.28 Looking south from the former gym flat roof to the Workmen's Hall



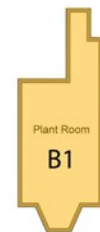
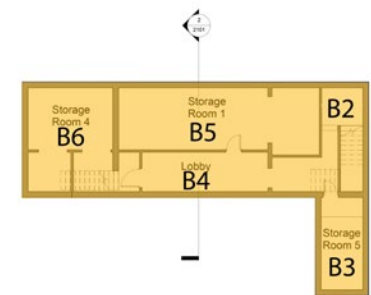
3.27 Views to the south from the Workmen's Hall towards Brand Street are blocked by the roof of 16-17 Brand Street

3.4. The Building Internally

3.4.1. Basement

Basement and Ground Floor Plan with phasing

- 1868 (Shilcock)
- 1900-1 (Lucas and Mountford)
- Early-20th-century
- Mid- to late-20th-century
- c.2013-15
- Modern glazing/doors



Basement Plan - Existing
1 : 100

B1 (Plant Room) [Plate 3.29]

This basement is under the 1900-1 building. Modern plant.

B2 (Stair to rooms under stage) [Plate 3.30]

This basement is part of the 1900-1 building. Historic plaster to walls of western corridor to B4, with some historic architrave and skirting. Modern stair, concrete floor and concrete block partition between B2 and B5.

B3 (Storage Room 5) [Plate 3.31]

Walls of exposed 1900-1 brickwork, with plaster stringer of former stair (removed) incised into east wall, and continued as incised roll moulding 'skirting' around bottom of wall. Concrete floor. Modern door and concrete block ceiling.

B4 (Lobby) [Plate 3.32]

Historic 1900-1 brickwork to south, east and west with modern blockwork to north. Large modern plant vent travels north-south at high level, through former opening in rear of stage. Concrete floor and modern doors.

B5 (Storage Room 1) [Plate 3.33]

Historic 1900-1 brick arch into west wall, infilled with concrete blockwork. South and west walls are further concrete blockwork. North wall is plastered. Concrete floor.

B6 (Storage Room 4) [Plates 3.34-3.35]

Walls of 1900-1 brickwork, with plaster stringer of former stair (removed) incised into south wall. Concrete floor. Other walls are a combination of 1900-1 brickwork and modern concrete blockwork.



3.29 Looking south in B1



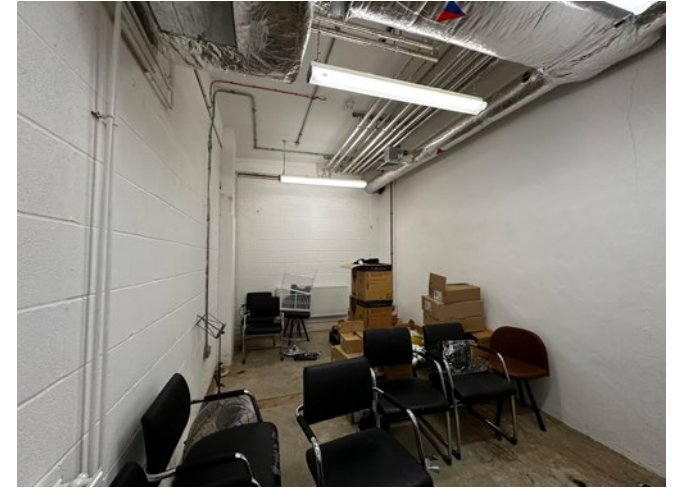
3.30 Looking south-west in B2



3.31 Looking south in B3



3.32 Looking west in B4



3.33 Looking west in B5



3.34 Looking south-east in B6



3.35 South wall of B6

3.4.2. Ground Floor

Basement and Ground Floor Plan with phasing



G1 (Entrance lobby) [Plates 3.36-3.39]

Circulation space within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original 1900-1 red quarry tile floor, skirting boards, lugged architraves and leaded oversight to main door, picture rail, staircase, doors into the former cloakroom (G2), archway to east and recessed ceiling. Former chimneybreast has lost its fireplace, and is now hung with a war memorial plaque. Front doors, doors to modern extension and doors to hall are modern, as are red tiles in front of lift and at far end of eastern corridor.

G2 (Admin Office/former cloakrooms) [Plates 3.40-3.42]

Original 2-panel door from G1 to G2. Window frames are historic, but some are inset with more recent modern glazing with applied leading that mimics the glazing patterns of the originals. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes are modern.

G3 (Cloaks and Store/former Town Surveyor's room) [Plates 3.43-3.44]

This room was originally divided into two, with a stair rising to first floor from the external west door. Historic external door to west. Window frames are historic, but inset with more recent modern glazing with applied leading that mimics the glazing patterns of the originals. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes are modern.

G4 (Community Hall) [Plates 3.45-3.48]

The 1900-1 hall has retained many original features. The room centres on a stage to the north, with proscenium arch [Plate 3.49]. This is decorated with relief carving of roses and lavender; two crops that were harvested locally and were a source of wealth for some of the Town Hall's sponsors. The ceiling above the stage is lined with the original sarking boards and trap door. The floor is a sprung dance floor, which has had its floorboards renewed recently. Along the walls are original arched radiator recesses [Plate 3.50]. Historic inner doors survive to the western porch/lobby, while all other doors are modern [Plate 3.51]. To the south is a first floor balcony, supported on cast iron pillars. While the former balustrade has been covered with acoustic boards, the original structure appears to survive (see F5). Above, the hall is apparently lit with the original brass ring light fittings.

Modern acoustic panels have been applied to walls and ceiling, a modern bar inserted to the south and the leaded lights of the Diocletian windows has been replaced with modern frames inset with plain glass panels.

G5 (Goods access) [Plate 3.52]

Backstage space. Some original roof structure visible but largely changed with modern stair insertion and services.

G6 (Museum Store) [Plate 3.53]

Not accessed at time of survey.

G7 (Backstage stairs) [Plate 3.54]

Historic original door and stair to first floor (stair to external ground floor level is modern).

G8 (Dressing Room) [Plates 3.55-3.57]

Original 1900-1 dressing room with attached WC to west. Original 1900-1 WC door with brass fittings. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G9 (Bar Store) [Plate 3.58]

All modern fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G10 (Kitchen) [Plate 3.59]

All modern fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G11 (Museum café and shop) [Plate 3.60]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. Part of the original 1900-1 Town Hall east exterior wall encased in the modern extension. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G12 (Male WC)

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. All modern fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G13 (Accessible WC)

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. All modern fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G14 (Female WC)

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. All modern fittings, fixtures and finishes.

G15 (Circulation) [Plate 3.61]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. Historic buttressed brick wall of 1868 Workmen's Hall, with infilled windows, exposed and forming east wall of circulation space. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G16 (Local Studies) [Plate 3.62]

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. Recesses in east wall. Historic cast iron column supporting ceiling to east (seemingly the supporting the former gallery that surrounded the hall in the Workmen's Hall). All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G17 (Archive) [Plate 3.63]

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G18 (Museum Store)

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. Not accessed at time of survey.

G19 (Server room)

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. Not accessed at time of survey.

G20 (Museum Display)

Within the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G21 (Temporary Gallery)

Within the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

G22 (Workshop)

All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern. Not accessed at time of survey.

G23 (Store)

Within the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern. Not accessed at time of survey.

G24 (Art Store)

Within the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern. Not accessed at time of survey.

G25 (Escape)

Within the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern. Not accessed at time of survey.



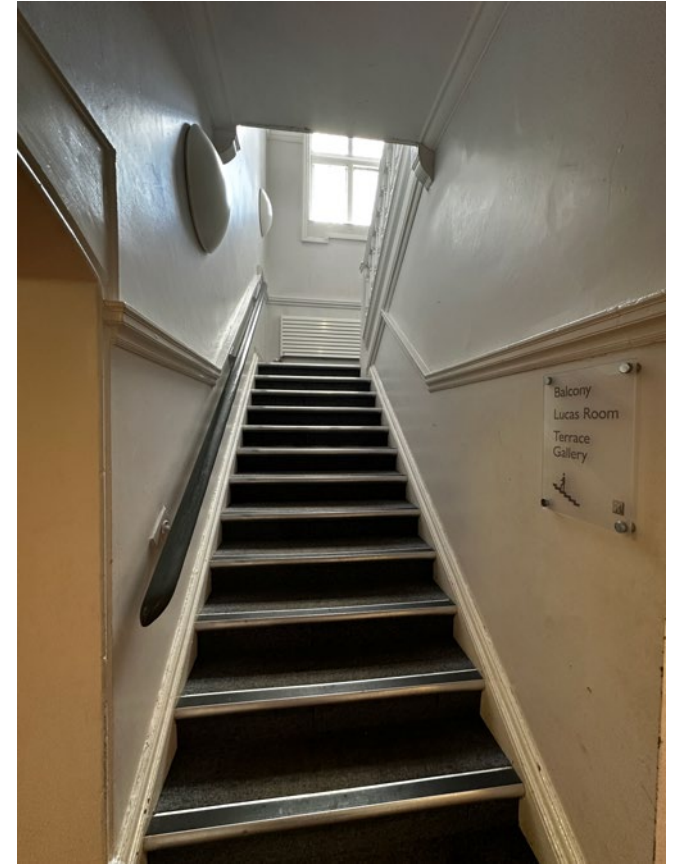
3.36 Looking south-west in G1



3.37 Looking north-east in G1



3.38 Looking east down corridor from G1 to G11



3.39 Stair from G1 to first floor



3.40 Looking south-east in G2



3.42 Historic door to G2



3.41 Detail of fixed casement leaded window in G2



3.43 Looking south-west in G3



3.44 Looking north in G3



3.45 Looking north in G4 from balcony



3.46 Looking east in G4



3.47 Looking south in G4 from stage



3.48 Looking west in G4



3.49 Detail of stage and proscenium arch



3.50 Detail of radiator recess



3.51 Detail of original double doors

Plate to follow



3.52 Looking east in G5

3.53 G6



3.54 Looking west in G7 staircase



3.55 Looking north-west in G8



3.56 Looking north-west in WC



3.57 Detail of original door fittings



3.58 Looking north in G9



3.59 Looking north in G10



3.60 Part of historic 1900-1 Town Hall external wall, encased in modern museum cafe and shop G11



3.61 Modern stair in G15 with 1868 wall of Workmen's Hall



3.62 Looking east in G16



3.63 Looking north in G17

3.4.3. First Floor

First Floor Plan with phasing



- 1868 (Shilcock)
- 1900-1 (Lucas and Mountford)
- Early-20th-century
- Mid- to late-20th-century
- c.2013-15
- Modern glazing/doors

F1 (Foyer) [Plates 3.64-3.66]

Upper foyer of 1900-1 Town Hall. Original staircase from ground floor (G1), leaded light cross-window, 2- and 3-panel doors to F3 and F4 (but with some fireboard applied), skirting, architraves, cornice and leaded, high-level internal windows to F3. Modern lift inserted where stair to ground floor external door formerly rose. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F2 (Meeting Room) [Plates 3.67-3.69]

Upper floor room within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original leaded light cross-windows, with ornate wrought-iron latches and axially-hinged toplights. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F3 (Ante Room) [Plates 3.70-3.71]

Upper floor room within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original leaded light cross-windows, with ornate wrought-iron latches and axially-hinged toplights, but with glazing replaced since 1900-1 (and no longer containing the circular leaded motif). Original high-level, internal windows with circular leaded motif, doors, skirting, architraves and cornice. Blocked corner fireplace in north-west corner. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F4 (Lucas Room) [Plates 3.72-3.74]

Upper floor room within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original leaded light cross-windows, with ornate wrought-iron latches and axially-hinged toplights. Original plasterwork ceiling and overmantel, doors, chimneypiece, hearth kerb, grate, tiles, skirting, architraves and cornice.

F5 (Balcony) [Plate 3.75]

Balcony within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original architraves, dado rail doors and skirting, but with modern doors. Former tiered seating has been floored over, so that current glass balustrade stands atop the handrail of the former wooden balustrade. Modern bulkhead conceals air handling units.

F6 (Store) [Plates 3.76-3.78]

Backstage store within the 1900-1 Town Hall. Original timber casements, doors, coat hooks and matchboard stair partitions. Currently used for plant. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F7 (Museum display) [Plate 3.79]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. Part of the original 1900-1 Town Hall east exterior wall encased in the modern extension, with modern Diocletian frames inset with modern glazing. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F8 (Roof terrace) [Plate 3.80]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F9 (Circulation) [Plate 3.81]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. Historic buttressed brick wall of 1868 Workmen's Hall, with infilled windows, exposed and forming east wall of circulation space. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F10 (WCs)

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F11 (Museum display) [Plate 3.82]

Within c.2013-15 museum first-floor extension above the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F12 (Store) [Plate 3.83]

Within c.2013-15 museum first-floor extension above the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F13 (AOV)

Within c.2013-15 museum first-floor extension above the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F14 (Escape)

Within c.2013-15 museum first-floor extension above the early-20th-century gym. All fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

F15 (Office) [Plate 3.84]

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. Historic cast iron columns supporting floor above, with historic pilasters topped with plain capitals along the walls. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.



3.64 Looking north-east in F1



3.66 Stair from G1 to F1



3.68 Looking north in F2



3.65 Looking north-west in F1



3.67 Looking south-west in F2



3.69 Detail of original 1900-1 window with latch and axial hinged toplight



3.70 Looking south in F3



3.71 Looking north in F3



3.72 Looking east in F4 (Lucas Room)



3.73 Looking west in F4 (Lucas Room)



3.74 Detail of fireplace and overmantle in F4



3.75 Looking west in F5



3.76 Stair to F5



3.77 Looking south-west in F5



3.78 Looking east in F5



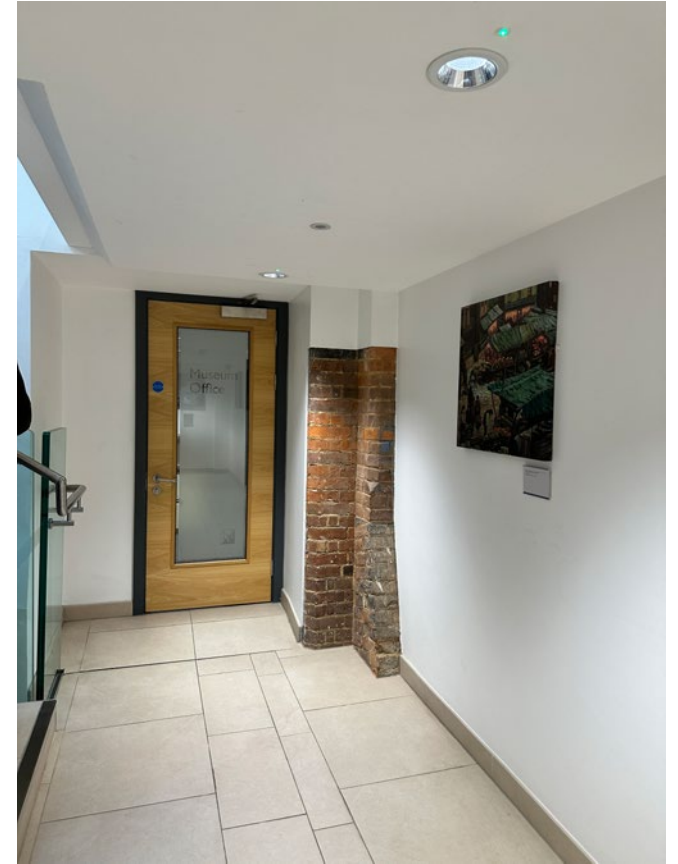
3.79 Looking south-east in F7



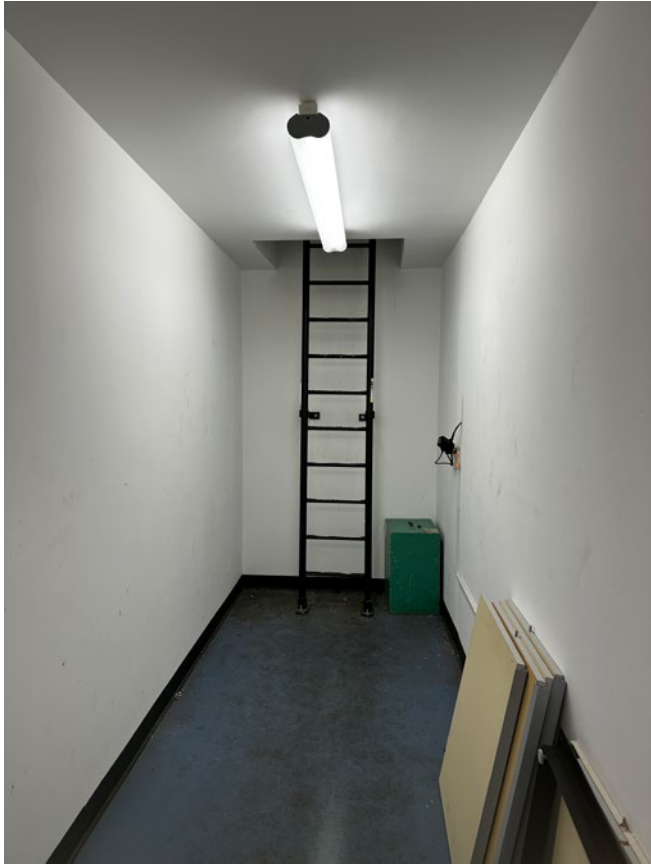
3.80 Looking north from F7 to F8



3.82 Looking north in F11



3.81 Looking east towards F15 from F9



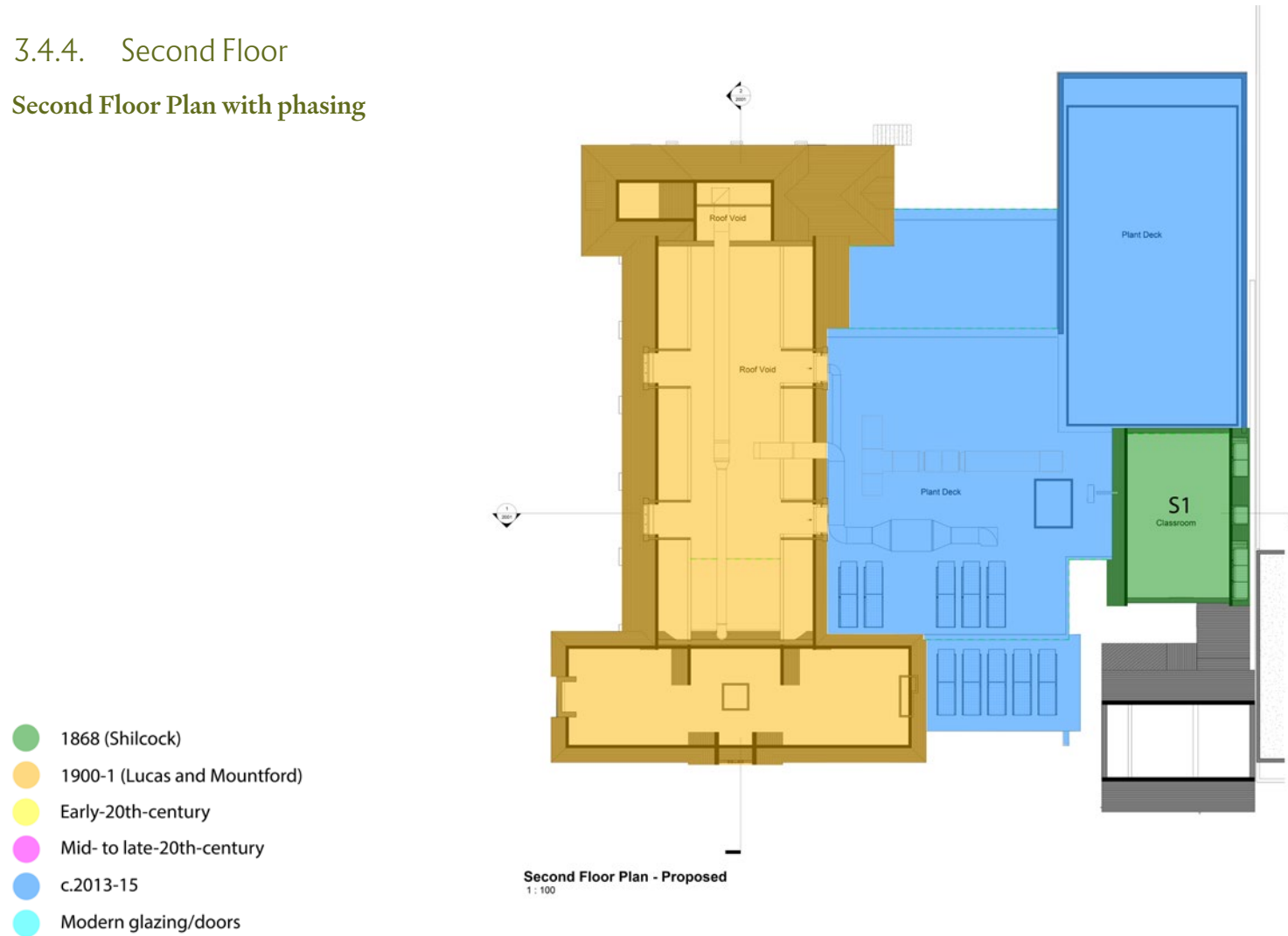
3.83 Looking east in F12



3.84 Looking south-east in F15

3.4.4. Second Floor

Second Floor Plan with phasing



S1 (Circulation) [Plate 3.85]

Within c.2013-15 museum extension. Historic buttressed brick wall of 1868 Workmen's Hall, with infilled windows, exposed and forming east wall of circulation space. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.

S2 (Classroom) [Plates 3.86-3.88]

Within the 1868 Workmen's Hall. Attic space, formerly used as a classroom for the Workmen's Hall. Original 1868 chamfered trusses braced with historic tension rods. The pilasters from the room below continue at up the walls of this room. Historic double sash windows to west. All other fittings, fixtures and finishes modern.



3.85 Looking east on second floor landing S1



3.86 Looking south-east in S2



3.87 Looking north-east in S2



3.88 Double sash in F2

4. Assessment of Significance

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of significance of Hitchin Town Hall, so that the proposals for change to the buildings are fully informed as to its significance and so that the effect of the proposals on that significance can be evaluated. A brief assessment of the character and appearance of the conservation area is also set out.

This assessment responds to the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework to ‘recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance’. The NPPF defines significance as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological (potential to yield evidence about the past), architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

4.2. Assessment of Significance

The listed building of the Grade II listed Hitchin Town Hall includes the 1868 Workmen's Hall and early 20th-century gym, the significance of which is summarised below.

4.2.1. Hitchin Town Hall

Hitchin Town Hall was built 1900-1 to designs by Hitchin local and Garden City architect (Thomas) Geoffry Lucas and consulting architect and designer of the Crown Courts Edward William Mountford. The façade draws on early-18th-century style symmetry, red brickwork, deep eaves cornice, hipped roof, cross-windows and leaded lights, but with an unexpected twist in the form of a central pediment and pebble-dash panel. To the rear is a long hall range which draws on the Arts and Crafts movement, with pebble-dash and red brick walls inset with large Diocletian windows and Queen Anne style dormer windows in the roof. The designs strongly reflect the interests of its young architect Lucas – vernacular elements interspersed with the pebble-dash finish that would feature so heavily in Garden City domestic architecture – and the experience of its consulting architect, who was an extensive designer of public buildings and especially town halls.

While constructed on a strict budget, the design and embellishment of the interiors shows that careful and considerate design were used effectively to mitigate the lack of funds. These details include the plasterwork and chimneypiece in the Lucas Room and the airy spaciousness of the barrel-vaulted hall. Thoughtful touches include the rose and lavender wreath around the proscenium arch, linking the town's municipal architecture with its local economies.

The building was designed to function as a municipal building from its inception, with space for both local government meetings and public entertainment. It has played host to many events, including the iconic Bob Marley and the Wailers concert of 1973, which is still remembered fondly in the area. The spaces still fulfil the entertainment function and are valued highly as a space to bring the community together through a wide programme of events.

4.2.2. Workmen's Hall

The Workmen's Hall was built in 1868 to designs by James Shilcock and was built on a site formerly associated with the town's (separate) Mechanics Institute. Although Shilcock appears to have only worked locally, and mostly on a small scale building vicarages and schools, the building has

some significance for its role in the larger national Temperance Movement, where working men were encouraged to abstain from alcohol in favour of improving pursuits such as attending lectures, reading, and playing games. Organisations, like the Quakers, hoped that this would reduce the alcohol-related poverty crippling the working classes and enable these men to educate themselves out of that poverty, and ultimately free themselves.

The building has undergone many alterations, including flooring over the double-height hall, separating it from its original frontage 16-17 Brand Street, and being largely encased in the modern extension, but its original polychromatic brickwork, buttressed external walls can still be seen from this extension and the iron columns that supported the gallery survive within the offices that now subdivide the space.

4.2.3. Gym

Little is known of the gym, beyond that it was built in the early 20th-century and was used for gym classes. The building has undergone many alterations, with the original building only being apparent externally at ground-floor level, with its gently pointed rubbed brick lintels.

4.2.4. Hierarchy of Significance

This special interest is manifest in the setting, fabric and plan form of the building, which has the following hierarchy of significance.

Of the highest significance are:

- The 1900-01 Neo-Georgian street façade, with its deep eaves cornice, pediment, painted pebbledash and leaded cross-window casements.
- The 1900-1 hall, with proscenium arch and stage, particularly where this is embellished with relief carvings of the locally-grown commercial flowers – rose and lavender.
- The 1900-1 Lucas Room with its plasterwork mouldings and grand chimneypiece.

Of high significance are:

- The 1900-1 Entrance Foyer with its red quarry tiles, staircase, recessed ceiling and war memorial plaque.
- The surviving elements of the 1868 Workmen's Hall, including cast-iron columns, decorative polychromatic brickwork, evidence of the former gallery, chamfered roof trusses and ground-floor recesses.

- The 1900-1 Ante Room with leaded toplights and original doors
- All original 1900-1 joinery, including windows, doors, architraves, skirting, etc.

Of moderate significance are:

- Evidential historic fabric showing the former uses of the 1900-1 backstage areas. For example, coat hooks, original doors, sarking boards.
- The external envelope of the early-20th-century gym, especially in the form of rubbed brick voussoirs

4.2.5. Hitchin Conservation Area

Hitchin is a large market town with Saxon origins, with many buildings occupying medieval burgage plots and extensive use of timber-framing and red brick in the town centre.

Brand Street lies to the west of the historic town centre and marketplace within character area 2a of the Hitchin Conservation Area Appraisal. Historically, it was a narrow alleyway, but was widened in the 1830s to create the wide aspect that we see today. Consequently, the historic character of the street is defined by mid-19th-century

development, specifically municipal buildings that were becoming popular in this period due to reforms in local government and developing ideas of philanthropy and charity. Several of these buildings were financed by the town's prominent Quakers, who also built their Meeting House at the west end of Brand Street in this period.

Today, it is a busy street and its character has been compromised by modern 1960s and 1970s red-brick development, especially nos. 19-21 Brand Street and Croft Court.

Grammar School Walk runs along the west side of the Town Hall, is a quieter street of secondary character and does not make up one of the 'important views' identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal. The west elevation of the Town Hall, the 19th century former Friends Meeting House and mature trees provide the character and interest along this road, with features such as the car parking areas and plant an existing presence, though not prominently so.

5. Commentary on the Proposals

5.1. Description of the Proposals and their Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposals for the decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall and Hitchin Museum include the removal of a gas boiler and installation of PV panels, ASHPs, new air handling units, secondary glazing, insulation in the roof void and other minor work as outlined in the drawings and Design and Access Statement by Saunders Boston architects.

The proposals seek to minimise harm to the listed building whilst achieving the aims of decarbonising the Town Hall and Museum buildings and improving comfort levels within the buildings. The scheme particularly seeks to address issues with comfort levels in the Mountford Hall during large events, to ensure it continues to be a well-used event space.

Externally, the proposals include the addition of solar PV panels to modern, unlisted areas of the museum building roof, the removal and replacement of the east-facing dormer windows with ventilation grilles, and the siting of a stand of ASHPs enclosed in a fence with access gates.

Internally, the scheme would provide replacement service runs largely in existing routes, to connect

the new technologies with relevant plant and the rooms they serve. South (front) elevation windows will be fitted with secondary glazing.

The proposed ASHPs enclosure fence would largely be hidden along Grammar School Walk but will be glimpsed when travelling past or entering the multi-storey carpark.

The proposals are described in detail below, with the impact on the listed building and conservation area set out in italics.

5.2. External

The main south elevation of the Town Hall will be unaltered through the proposed work.

The rear north elevation of the building would see a new steel louvered fence erected to enclose a newly located block of ASHPs. The enclosure will be accessed through a gate. This element of the proposals would result in *a low level of less than substantial harm* to the listed building.

The west elevation of the building, which addresses Grammar School Walk, would be unaltered by the proposed work.

The east elevation of the building will be altered through the removal of the existing timber

casement windows and replacement with sensitively-designed vents to serve the replacement heating and ventilation system. This element of the proposals will result in *less than substantial harm* to the listed building.

5.3. Internal

The proposals include new services runs in the building to connect up the proposed external technology to the rooms and equipment they will service.

To avoid undue disruption to the fabric of the listed building all pipework will run along existing service routes. This means new pipework will sit within existing false ceiling voids at ground floor level in the Cloaks and Store (G3), the corridor leading from there to the Foyer (G1), and in the Foyer itself. Vertical pipework will run up and down existing routes to avoid disruption to historic fabric. This element of the proposals will result in *no harm to the significance of the listed building*.

All windows in the south (front) elevation will be fitted with secondary glazing. These glazing units will sit within the existing window reveals and will ensure any remaining historical windows remain conserved. The secondary glazed units will match

the existing window style, for example for an existing window with a mullion and transom design the secondary glazed unit will have a mullion and transom form. This element of the proposals will result in a very low level of *less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building*.

Insulation within the roof void is proposed. It would be located in an area that is not architecturally sensitive and thus would result in *no harm to the significance of the listed building*.

5.4. Conservation Area

As above in section 4.2, the ASHPs would be enclosed within a new steel louvered fence with gates to enable access to the area. There is an existing service area to the rear of the building and the ASHPs would be located adjacent to this area, containing the plant visually within an existing functional area of the site. The west elevation of the building, which addresses Grammar School Walk, would be unaltered by the proposed work. This element of the proposals will result in a *low degree of less than substantial harm to the conservation area*.

5.5. Justification for the Proposals

The proposed new and replacement plant and servicing have been chosen through a careful process considering a range of options and then matching these with the building, its heritage significance, and its capacity to accommodate the various technologies. Alongside this, consideration has been taken regarding the character and appearance of the conservation area. Full details of this are set out in the Design and Access Statement, but are summarised as balancing the needs of the building with a range of other considerations including residential and neighbour amenity, the structural capacity of roofs to take on additional weight, and the functional needs of the new plant.

The North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan policy HE1 'Designated Heritage Assets' sets out that permission will be granted for development proposals affecting designated heritage assets where they a) enable heritage assets to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance; b) incorporates a palette of materials that makes a positive contribution to local character of distinctiveness; and c) will lead to less than substantial harm to significance and this harm is outweighed by public benefits of the proposals.

Through considered design choices this scheme will enable the continued and on-going use of the listed Town Hall in a manner that is compatible with both its significance as a listed building and a building fit for modern day functions. The proposal will improve comfort levels within the main hall through effective air management addressing condensation issues experienced when holding large functions. This will ensure that, as per HE1 (a), the Town Hall can continue to be used and enjoyed into the future.

The proposed position of the ASHPs and enclosure at the rear (north) of the building means that it is largely hidden and visual contained with the existing service area. The choice of steel louvered fence enclosure is fully reversible meaning that as technology changes the enclosure could be modified (subject to correct consents) with relative ease and with no impacts on the listed building. The ASHPs are positioned adjacent to existing service areas at the rear of the building protecting the principal elevations of the front (south) and side (west) and ensuring their architectural significance is maintained.

Our assessment, as set out in sections 5.1-5.3 are that the proposals would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and Hitchin Conservation Area. As such the Council will need to weigh up the public benefits case set out in the Design and Access Statement, as required by policy HE1 (c).

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a range of policies that the proposals are to be assessed against. Paragraph 208 require Council's to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets and take into account this understanding when considering proposals, with a view to avoiding or minimising any conflict between conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

The details of the options and process of consideration is set out in the Design and Access Statement, and this illustrates how the design process has sought to avoid and minimise harm to the listed building and the conservation area.

Paragraph 213 sets out that where any harm is proposed it should require clear and convincing justification, and as set out earlier in this section the Council are committed to improving the energy efficiency and user experience of the building, alongside decarbonising the buildings, and have taken a proportionate approach to considering the options before concluding on these range measures.

Paragraph 215 is similar the HE1 (c) in so far as any harm that would result from the proposals should be weighed up by the Council against the public benefits of the proposals. It is considered that in this case, the low level 'less than substantial' harm to the listed building and conservation area resulting from the proposals would be outweighed by the following public benefits of ensuring the Town Hall building is fit for purpose in the 21st century and can continue to be well used, thus sustaining its long-term future, which ultimately helps to conserve its overall architectural and historical interest.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 forms the legal basis for decision making where a proposed development will impact listed buildings or a conservation area. For listed buildings it sets out that the decision maker 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' (s. 16 and 66), and for conservation areas, that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that [conservation] area' (s. 72).

These statutory requirements set a high bar for allowing development that would harm heritage assets. However, the statutory requirements must be viewed in light of the relevant heritage policies in

the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As noted by the court in *Mordue v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2015): 'Paragraph 134 of the NPPF appears as part of a fasciculus of paragraphs, set out above, which lay down an approach which corresponds with the duty in section 66(1). Generally, a decision-maker who works through those paragraphs in accordance with their terms will have complied with the section 66(1) duty.' Although the court was concerned with the previous version of the NPPF and section 66 specifically, the same approach is considered appropriate in respect of the heritage policies in the current NPPF and in respect of the section 16 and 72 duties. It is therefore important to consider the proposed development against the relevant NPPF policies.

As explained above, there are elements of the proposals, comprising work to windows and the siting of a new group of ASHPs and screen fence that would result in some harm to the significance of Hitchin Town Hall. This would be a *low level less than substantial harm* to the listed building in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF. The proposals, which have sought to minimise harm, would result in a *low level of less than substantial harm* to Hitchin Conservation Area.

Both the North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan the NPPF set out provision for harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.

Therefore, overall and on balance, therefore, as proposals would comply with the Local Plan policy HE1 and paragraph 2-8, 213 and 215 of the NPPF, the statutory requirements have been met.

5.6. Conclusion

The proposals have been designed in order to improve energy efficiency and to reduce the carbon footprint of the building. The works are minor in nature and have been designed to minimise harm to the significance of the listed building and conservation area.

Although some harm has been identified within the proposals, this harm is considered to be a *low level of less than substantial*, in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF (para 215) and Local Plan Policy HE1, to both listed building and conservation area. The clear benefits offered by the scheme would, overall and on balance, outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm caused.

Appendix I - Statutory List Description

New Town Hall

Reasons for Designation

Hitchin Town Hall of 1900-1901, Brand Street, Hitchin is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural Interest: the front range of the building has carefully considered detailing expressing civil dignity balanced by the domestic quality of the flanking bays and rear hall. The building is designed by EW Mountford and Geoffry Lucas, renowned architects in the design of municipal and domestic buildings with many listed buildings to their names.

* Intactness: both the exterior and interior of the building are largely intact.

* Interior: the Lucas Room is distinguished for its decorative plasterwork.

* Group Value: Hitchin Town Hall has group value with the designated old Town Hall, the contrasting architecture of the two buildings demonstrating the evolution of the building type from the mid-C19 onwards.

Details

834/0/10013 BRAND STREET

14-OCT-10 (North side)

Town Hall

GV II

Town Hall, built 1900-1901, extended to the east in the later C20. Designed by Edward Mountford and T Geoffry Lucas for Hitchin Urban District Council.

MATERIALS

The building is constructed in red brick, laid in English bond, with rendered details and stone dressings.

PLAN

Approximately rectangular with a slightly projecting front office range, and late C20 extensions linking with the former Workmen's Hall and gymnasium to the east.

EXTERIOR

The building comprises a Neo-Georgian front range, with 'Wrenaissance' influence, and a rear hall in the Arts and Crafts style. The office range has stone capping to the brick plinth and quoins to the corners. The hipped tile-covered roof has a central cupola, an end stack at the east elevation and a stair turret beneath a gablet at the west elevation. A slightly projecting central panel of one bay framed by pilasters is clad in stone. At ground floor, a central moulded arched entrance with enlarged keystone has recessed later C20 glazed

and timber doors with small-paned leaded lights above. Iron lantern brackets and suspended lanterns are above either side of the arch. Carved at the top of the pilasters are the letters HU (to the left) and DC (to the right) with AD and MCM (the date in Roman numerals) beneath. At first floor, a pair of lancet windows with small-paned leaded lights and a moulded stone lintel lie beneath a pediment with central carved coat of arms and foliate motifs. The pediment and eaves rest on modillions. On either side of the central bay are three windows each to the ground and first floors. At ground floor, four are original mullion windows with small-paned leaded lights; two to the left of centre have inserted transoms. All first-floor windows are mullion and transom windows with leaded lights.

The hall to the rear has a tiled gable roof and rough-cast render at the upper levels. It is five bays long, has a rectangular plan and lies at a right angle to the front range. Each bay is defined by half-buttresses and has a semi-circular or Diocletian window with two mullions beneath the eaves. There are two tile-hung dormers to each pitch with timber casement windows. The west elevation has a central opening at ground floor with stone quoins, part glazed doors and a canted, pent roof. To the rear is a remodelled brick extension with hipped roofs, partly constructed in the same style as the hall, which accommodates the stage and back rooms internally.

The later C20, flat-roofed single and two-storey extensions to the east obscure the east elevation of the hall and have no historic interest. The linked, much altered, two-storey gymnasium has a half-hipped roof covered in slate with dentil cornice, some contrasting brickwork and replacement windows.

INTERIOR

In the office range, a central ground-floor foyer has contemporary quarry tiles, plain dado rail and cornices and a wooden plaque commemorating honours won by Hitchin men in World War I. A simple, enclosed staircase leads to the first floor. The rooms off the staircase are plain in decoration, served by corridors with arched openings, plain dado rails and cornices. The Lucas room on the first floor has two entrance doors with a moulded architrave. A fireplace at the east end has a deeply coloured tile and carved wood surround. There is a plaster cartouche, thought to represent the Lucas family crest, surrounded by foliate and shell motifs above. There are deep cornices, some with egg and dart motifs.

To the rear of the foyer double doors lead to the multi-functional hall. The hall has an adjustable sprung wooden floor, contemporary with its construction, and a barrel-vaulted ceiling with prominent concrete beams rising from columns

and elaborate consoles to the cornice. The details on the consoles represent a rose and lavender, crops grown locally for the horticultural and pharmaceutical industries. Contemporary brass light fittings remain. To the north, the stage has a simply moulded proscenium arch and remodelled rooms beneath. To the south, a first-floor gallery is supported on three slender columns; a separate access to the seated gallery is at the first floor. On the east side, an inserted double opening leads to a remodelled corridor partly integrated into the later C20 extensions which incorporate a new entrance into the complex and link the hall with the former Workmen's Hall and Gymnasium. The latter now serves as a late C20 sports facility and the former hall has been subdivided; neither have fixtures and fittings of interest.

HISTORY

Hitchin Town Hall was constructed for Hitchin Urban District Council in 1900-1901 as a replacement for the Old Town Hall of 1840, also on Brand Street. Built on land donated in 1897 by local dignitaries Frederic Seeböhm and William and Alfred Ransom, the competition to design the Town Hall was won by Edward Mountford and T Geoffrey Lucas. It was constructed at a cost of £7,300 and combined council offices and a hall. A small extension at the rear of the hall was built on land

donated by Dr Oswald Foster and appears to have been either constructed or remodelled during the interwar years. In the 1960s the hall was extended to the south-east, linking it to the Workmen's Hall and Gymnasium of 1841, resulting in some exterior and interior remodelling.

SOURCES

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A Stuart Gray. Edwardian Architecture A Biographical Dictionary (1985) p.237, 267-9

Pevsner, N and Cherry, B. The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire: 2nd Edition (1977) pp 204-205.

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REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Hitchin Town Hall of 1900-1901, Brand Street, Hitchin is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural Interest; the front range of the building has carefully considered detailing expressing civil dignity balanced by the domestic quality of the flanking bays and elevations of the rear hall. The building was designed by E

W Mountford and T Geoffrey Lucas, renowned architects in the design of municipal and domestic buildings with many listed buildings to their names

- * Intactness; both the exterior and interior of the building are largely intact

- * Interior; the Lucas Room is distinguished for its decorative plasterwork

- * Group Value; Hitchin Town Hall has group value with the designated old Town Hall, the contrasting architecture of the two buildings demonstrating the evolution of the building type from the mid-C19 onwards.

Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 16, 66 and 72(I) of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

[...] 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.

Similarly, section 66 of the above Act states that:

In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be 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.

Similarly, section 72(I) of the above Act states that:

[...] with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Local Policy

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy SP10: Healthy Communities

We will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for our residents. We will

- a) Support the retention of existing community, cultural, leisure or recreation facilities;
- b) Require appropriate levels of new community, cultural, leisure and built sport & recreation facilities to be provided in new development;
- c) Work with the NHS Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and other relevant providers to ensure appropriate coverage of healthcare facilities across the District;
- d) Maintain the network of local retail centres identified in Policy SP4 and support the retention of locally-important shops;
- e) Work with Hertfordshire County Council

and education providers to ensure the planning system contributes to the provision of sufficient school places and facilitates the provision of new or expanded schools in appropriate and accessible locations. This will include monitoring of projected future demand to inform the review of this plan in relation to secondary education provision for the Stevenage area; and

f) Protect, enhance and create new physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.

Policy SP11: Natural resources and sustainability

This Plan seeks to meet the challenges of climate change and flooding.

We will:

- a) Support proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations;
- b) Take a risk based approach to development and flood risk, directing development to areas at lowest risk in accordance with the NPPF and ensuring the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other appropriate measures;
- c) Support the principles of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017 and seek to protect, enhance and manage the water environment;
- d) Give consideration to the potential or actual

impact of land contamination and support proposals that involve the remediation of contaminated land; and

e) Work with utilities providers, East Hertfordshire District Council and relevant agencies to ensure additional wastewater treatment capacity is delivered without harm to protected European sites.

Policy SP13: Historic environment

The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

a) Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;

b) Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register;

c) Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and

d) Publication of detailed guidance.

Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets

Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;

ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and

iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;

b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and

c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of

the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Hitchin Conservation Area

'Brand Street leads off High Street and represents a 19th century widening of a former alleyway. It has more mixed development than the other two streets, and has suffered from a greater degree of modern infilling or redevelopment. The western end of the street is dominated by Hitchin Town Hall, built in 1900 and grade II listed. To the north-west is the former Friends Meeting House (grade II listed and now known as Centenary House) and located almost opposite the Town Hall on the south side of Brand Street, is the former Town Hall of 1840 (now 'Ivory'), which is also grade II listed and provides a rare example in the town centre of a substantial, stuccoed building. The corner into Paynes Park is marked by an unfortunate red brick block of offices, four storeys high and dating to the 1970s or 1980s. Beyond the current Friends Meeting House (a BLI) and to the west, is Thomas Bellamy House, an early to mid 19th century yellow

brick grade II listed building marking the entrance into the conservation area from this direction.

Positive features:

- Survival of historic street layout, representing the location of the former livestock market;
- Almost continuous frontages of high quality listed buildings, some of them listed grade II*
- (nos. 26/27 and nos. 105/106 Bancroft);
- Former carriage entrances provide access to courts behind the frontage buildings;
- Not every building has a shopfront, reinforcing the residential character of parts of the area;
- Mixture of timber framed more vernacular buildings and high quality red or yellow brick
- Georgian townhouses;
- Pitched tiled roofs and chimneys important;
- Pleasantly domestic scale;
- Principle shopping street in the town, well served by on-street car parking and adjoining

- surface car parks;
- Traditional (though modern) stone paving and other features relating to the 1990s
- enhancement scheme.

Important views:

- View 1: Southwards down Bancroft, taking in the widening street (once the site of the Livestock Market) and the rows of varied listed buildings on either side of the street;
- View 2: View northwards along Bancroft, similarly focusing on the gently curving street, widening roadway, and rows of listed buildings on either side;
- View 3: View in a westerly direction up Brand Street, taking in the listed Old Town Hall on the left with longer views to the trees around the modern Quaker Meeting House;
- View 4: Southwards down High Street, noting the narrowing of the road towards the Market Place, the street being lined with varied buildings, most of them either listed or 'historic';
- View 5: View in an easterly direction towards Brand Street taking in the grade II listed later Hitchin Town Hall on the left.

Negative features:

- Some pedestrian and vehicular conflict;
- Some 1960s or 1970s development of little merit, particularly in Brand Street, including no. 19 ('New Look' and 'Argos') and no. 20/21 ('Halfords') Brand Street;
- New development has impinged on backlands including the loss of gardens and courts, most notably facing Grammar School Walk, such as Croft Court and the back section of Wilkinson, no. 19 Bancroft;
- Public realm is 'tired' with a certain amount of street clutter;
- Vacant shops;
- Munts Alley is affected by poor quality alterations to some of the buildings.

Opportunities for enhancement:

- Public realm improvements needed – 'refresh' the 1990s scheme in High Street'

National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (2024). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

With regard to ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’, the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset’s significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to ‘contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’ and that, at a very high level, ‘the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

and notes at paragraph 10:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

With regard to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a

heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 210 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

With regard to potential ‘harm’ to the significance designated heritage asset, in paragraph 212 the framework states the following:

... great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 213 that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Where a proposed development will lead to ‘substantial harm’ to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset paragraph 214 of the NPPF states that:

...local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

With regard to ‘less than substantial harm’ to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 215 of the NPPF states the following;

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.

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 220, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Consultation Draft NPPF (December 2025)

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

HE4: Securing the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets

1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:

- a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness;
- b. Avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead preserve and enhance this significance.

2. If harm to the significance of heritage assets cannot be minimised or avoided, there should be a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter.

3. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset.

4. Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.

HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

1. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be consulted as a minimum, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.

2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on heritage assets and

their setting should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

- a. Have a positive effect, which is where a heritage asset would be enhanced, or its significance better revealed; or
- b. Have no effect on the significance of the asset; or
- c. Result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or
- d. Cause the total loss of the significance of the heritage asset.

3. In making this assessment it is the effect on an asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

4. Decision makers should be satisfied that this assessment accurately reflects the effects on heritage assets caused by the proposals.

5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, heritage assets with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-

based assessment should be employed and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on a designated heritage asset, substantial weight⁷⁴ should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.

2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on designated heritage assets should be approved.

3. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term re-use of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.

4. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent

should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the development is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:

- a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and
- d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.

5. Within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets

1. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on non-designated heritage assets should be approved.
2. Where a development proposal would cause harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

HE8: World Heritage Sites

1. To secure the long-term future of World Heritage Sites 76 and support the preservation and enhancement of their significance and Outstanding Universal Value, development proposals that affect a World Heritage Site should:
 - a. Be designed in a way which pays particular regard to the significance and attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site (including any contribution made by its setting and any buffer zone);
 - b. Take into consideration any relevant implications of the World Heritage Site management plan; and

c. Be supported by an assessment of the impact, including any potential cumulative impact, on the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. This should include appropriate information such as visual impact assessments and natural environment, archaeological or historical data.

2. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance or Outstanding Universal Value. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the significance or Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site, the assessment of impact should take into account the relative significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the World Heritage Site as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.

3. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting of a World Heritage Site that make a positive contribution to it (or which better reveal its significance) should be approved.

HE9: Conservation areas

1. Development proposals within or affecting the

significance of conservation areas should:

- a. Retain and restore buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area wherever possible; and
 - b. Consider the area's special architectural or historic interest (as identified as part of the designation of the conservation area) in the design of development.
2. Not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the character or appearance of a conservation area that is desirable to preserve or enhance, the assessment of impact should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.
3. Proposals that preserve those elements of a conservation area that make a positive contribution to it (or which better reveal its significance) should be approved.

HE11: Loss or removal of heritage assets

1. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset (whether designated or not):

- a. The development should not be approved without all reasonable steps being taken to make sure that the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred, including through the use of planning conditions and planning obligations to secure the development against the loss of the asset;
- b. The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by being deposited in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository. The ability to record evidence of our past should not be a decisive factor in deciding whether such loss should be approved.

2. Development proposals to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), should retain the feature in situ wherever possible (and, where appropriate, be supported by an explanation of their historic and social context).

National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published on 23 July 2019 to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning system. It includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The relevant guidance is as follows:

Paragraph 2: What is meant by the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost
- interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past; and
- make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 218)

Paragraph 6: What is “significance”?

‘Significance’ in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National

Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

- historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms ‘special architectural or historic interest’ of a listed building and the ‘national importance’ of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.

Paragraph 7: Why is ‘significance’ important in decision-taking?

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Paragraph 13: What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Paragraph 15: What is the optimum viable use for a heritage asset and how is it taken into account in planning decisions?

The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation.

By their nature, some heritage assets have limited or even no economic end use. A scheduled monument in a rural area may preclude any use of the land other than as a pasture, whereas a listed building may potentially have a variety of alternative uses such as residential, commercial and leisure.

In a small number of cases a heritage asset may be capable of active use in theory but be so important and sensitive to change that alterations to accommodate a viable use would lead to an

unacceptable loss of significance.

It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also for the future conservation of the asset: a series of failed ventures could result in a number of unnecessary harmful changes being made to the asset.

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner, subject of course to obtaining any necessary consents.

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. The policy on addressing substantial and less than substantial harm is set out in paragraphs 212-215 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 18: How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 212-215) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute

substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage

asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 213).

Paragraph 20: What is meant by the term public benefits?

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (December 2017)

Historic England: Conservation Principles and Assessment (2008)