Address:
Kettering Library
Sheep Street
Kettering
Northants
NN16 0AY

Reason for development:

Northamptonshire County Council operates Library services throughout Northamptonshire as part of its statutory provision. The Library Service provides opportunities for leisure, information and learning for all who live, work or study in the area.

It has been identified that Kettering Library currently has significant problems with the existing floor surface, with sections lifting and causing a trip hazard. Therefore certain areas of the library are currently taped off, restricting the circulation routes within the building for both staff and the public.

The existing floor comprises of a parquet floor which lies beneath carpet tiles.

Inspection of the existing floor has identified a bituminous compound, which lies immediately under the 'parquet' floor. This appears to have been sprayed on to form a damp-proof membrane immediately below the bottom of the timber floor. A cementitious grout type screed material overlays the bituminous coating which appears to sit onto the ground floor slab directly.

Further inspection of the floor identified that the existing bituminous waterproof membrane appears to have broken down. The extent of this failure in relation to the whole floor is unknown. The breakdown of this membrane has allowed moisture to gain access to the timber flooring from below ground level via the concrete slab, screed and through the bituminous membrane.

It appears that the flooring has been sealed in the top surface and a carpet fitted. Therefore this has prevented the moisture from escaping from the timber flooring into the atmosphere.

The increased moisture content within the timber flooring has caused the timber to swell. Due to the extent of the block work interlocking this has caused the floor to expand, and in turn has led to a raised curvature of timber flooring within various locations within the library.
Existing Site/proposals:

The existing building is a Grade II listed structure originally constructed as a lending library, a use which continues to date. The building is largely of single storey structure with two storeys to the rear. The building is built of red sand 'bricks' with Ketton Stone dressings. It has a Collyweston slate roof and parquet floor throughout the building.

The building provides a public service to over 350,000 customers from the Kettering area per year. The library is open to the public all day from Monday to Saturday, with late night opening occurring on a Monday and Tuesday. In addition, administration offices supporting the day to day management of Kettering Library are integrated within the library layout.

There are a number of options available to resolve the current issues with the 'parquet' floor:

Option 1 – Works to areas currently affected

The existing ‘lifting’ sections of the parquet floor to be carefully taken up and removed from site. The existing loose floor surface to then be removed prior to making good with a cement/screed over a liquid damp proof membrane to the local area. A self-levelling screed can then be applied to bring a level floor surface. The carpet finish can then be reinstated following the curing of the floor make-up.

Option 2 – removal of parquet flooring

The complete removal of all the timber flooring and bearing screed, exposing a solid base sufficient to accept a liquid damp proof membrane. A new screed/self-levelling compound is applied throughout and made ready to accept carpet finish.

Option 3 – Works to full flooring area

The complete removal of all the timber flooring and bearing screed to expose a solid base that is sufficient to accept a liquid damp proof membrane. The timber flooring is to be cleaned and stacked to enable it to be re-used. It is likely that 5% of the timber floor will need to be replaced with new. A new concrete slab is to be laid to suit existing levels with damp proof membrane together with levelling screed/compound to receive parquet flooring. Carpet will be re-laid to identified areas on top of the parquet flooring.

Design Approach:

Option one and two have a number of principle disadvantages:
a) This does not resolve the problem with moisture migration over the remainder of the timber flooring. As the problem appears to be widespread, the situation will undoubtedly occur in the near future to different areas of the library currently unaffected.

b) The ‘new’ screed will require a certain amount of time to cure.

c) This option does not consider or cater for the significance of the original floor covering.

It is recognised that the timber parquet flooring within Kettering Library was the intended floor surface forming part of the original interior design. Due to the disadvantages of option 1 and 2 outlined above, option 3 is the preferred proposal for resolving the current issues with the ‘parquet’ floor.

The prime objective is that all proposals would respect the historical context of the ‘listed’ classification and original intentions of the interior design scheme, whilst also reflecting the operational needs of the library service.

**Staffing Implications:**

The completion of this work will not impact on the current staffing levels.

**Pre-application publicity:**

This proposed scheme, to repair the floor at Kettering Library has been developed with the full knowledge and support of the Northamptonshire County Council’s Library Service.

**Demolitions:**

No demolition is required on site prior to development.

**Trees to be felled:**

There are no trees to be felled as part of this development.

**Vehicle Access:**

Access to the site is via a small driveway to the side of the building from Sheep Street Kettering.
Currently the site has car parking space utilised for customers and disabled drivers. Prior arrangements will be made with the library staff with regards to contractor parking as and when required.

**Site access during construction period:**

Existing access to the site will be used by the contractor. This also forms the main public access to the library. This area will have to be kept clear at all times until it becomes necessary to carry out the proposed works within that particular part of the building. The programme of works will be developed in detail in conjunction with the Library Service in order to ensure effective contract delivery and minimal disruption to service.

**Car Parking:**

On completion of works the current car park will remain as it is currently.

**Services Implications:**

No services will be affected by the proposed works,
Kettering Library, Kettering
Proposed Floor Replacement
Design & Access Statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the associated building plans and supporting documentation.

Design

- **Use** – these works enable the continuation of use of the public library facility in a safe and appropriate manner by rectifying flooring problems that are currently causing access problems and therefore requiring certain areas of the library to be cordoned off from public access. These works will also ensure that the Grade II listed fabric is maintained in a appropriate manner.

- **Amount** – The development sees the total floor area of 728.16m² repaired and the original parquet floor re-laid. The detailed specification for the preferred approach, Option 3, comprises of:
  
  - Carry out the works in ‘floor area’ sections of around 50m² to allow the library to function without the need for complete closure. Partial closure of the library may be necessary at certain points during the works programme (refer drawing 765-02).
  - Carefully remove, clean and stack for reuse the existing timber block flooring. It is estimate that approximately 5% of the flooring may need to be replaced with new.
  - Remove completely the top screed and ground floor bearing slab.
  - Lay new concrete floor slab to suit existing levels with damp proof membrane together with levelling screed/compound suitable to receive parquet flooring.
  - The completed floor would be sanded level and made ready to receive protection/preservation oil. The colour and specification to match the existing covering. Carpet will be re-laid to identified areas on top of the parquet flooring.

The development takes place within the existing building. No alterations to the height, width or length of the building in relation to its surroundings are due to take place.

- **Layout** – The current layout of the building itself will not be altered. This development, however, does allow an opportunity for the library service to review the layout of the loose furniture within the main area of the building to meet the needs its customers.

- **Appearance** – There will be no alterations to the overall appearance of the building.
Access

- **Approach** – Surrounding/adjacent pathways and lighting levels, both internal and external, will not be affected by the works. However the works will ensure that effective access is maintained for both staff and members of the public by providing a level floor internally.

- **Parking** – This proposal sees no change to the existing parking arrangements on site.

- **Entrances** – There is currently a single entrance for vehicles and pedestrians off Sheep Street, and a pedestrian access to the upper ‘east’ area linking to the public car park. All entrance points and access points are not proposed to be altered in any way. The current entrance to Kettering Library complies with the Disability Discrimination Act.

- **Horizontal and Vertical Circulation** – There will be no alterations to the horizontal and vertical circulation within the building. However the works will ensure that horizontal circulation is greatly improved.

- **Access to all services** – All development will comply with the current Disability Discrimination Act to provide a fully accessible site area.

- **Emergency Egress/Alarm Systems and Evacuation Planning** – There will be no alterations to the current emergency egress/alarm systems and evacuation planning.

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L Browett  
Project Officer  
Property Asset Management  

19th November 2008