Job Ref: 6512

PLANNING SUPPORT DOCUMENT

Re-Roofing Project

at

George Row
Northampton
NN1 1ED

for

Northamptonshire County Council

Ref: 6512-010301-150713-MC-MC

July 2015
PLANNING JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

- The proposal is to repair / re-cover the one of the slate roofs at the County Council Offices.
- The County Council Offices were made a grade II listed building in 1968.
- Many of the existing slates are broken and have started to slip off the roof. The area below is part of the inner courtyard garden where people congregate. Therefore this is a current health and safety issue.
- Currently the buildings have a variety of different slate types and sizes. It is believed the 24” x 12” tile are the oldest slates, with various extensions and replacements over the years now giving a mish-mash of sizes.
- The existing grey PVC rain water guttering to 3 sides will be replaced with black powder coated aluminum.
- The ridge tiles will be removed from site and replaced with a traditional lead ridge.
- The lead flashings at abutments will be replaced with new code 4 lead.
- The ridge cowl is redundant and will be removed from site.
- The existing grey SVP projecting through the roof with be replaced with black PVC to match the main section of SVP.
- The existing rooflight will be retained as existing.
- The timber roof access door on gable end will be replaced with new.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND ENERGY STATEMENT

The proposal is to replace all the slates – the roof has been inspected by a local roofing Contractor who has in recent years maintained the roofs on the said property, who confirmed the following:

- The slates are very brittle and not fit to be re-used.
- He believes they have already been re-used in the past on this roof or another.
- The surround slates are mainly 20” x 10” welsh slate and recommends following suit.
- This will then also retain a small stock pile of the best 24” x 12” slates for repair works on the existing roofs with this size slate.
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

USE
• No change - County Council Offices

AMOUNT
• The roof area in plan is 78m².

LAYOUT & SCALE
• As existing.

LANDSCAPING
• N / A.

APPEARANCE
• As existing

ACCESS
• N / A.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a Listed Building Consent application to re-roof one of the existing slate roofs at Northampton County Council Offices, George Row, Northampton, NN1 1ED.

1.2 This Statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which states that special regard must be given by the Authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Listed Buildings and their setting, and Conservation Areas and their setting respectively. Its purpose is to explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed works.

1.3 The purpose of the Statement is to review the prevailing policies and other material considerations that are relevant to the determination of the Listed Building Consent and to present a case for granting permission.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The site is located within the Central Area of Northampton as defined on the Proposals Map of the Northampton Local Plan (1997), the Central Area Action Plan Boundary and Town Centre Boundary as defined in the Central Area Action Plan (2013).

2.2 The County Council Offices are a complex of buildings in the centre of Northampton owned by the County Council (Northamptonshire County Council). The site and buildings are bounded by George Row, Guildhall Road and Angel Street. The principal buildings are:

- County Hall
- Sessions House
- The Judges Lodgings
- The Centre Block
- The Old Gaol Block
- The Council Offices, Guildhall Road Block
- The County Constabulary Building

2.3 The County Council complex accommodates the democratic, and the numerous other administrative functions, of Northampton County Council. A number of the buildings within the County Hall complex are statutory Listed, with some elements classified Grade II* and others Grade II. The buildings were Listed in 1968 (09/12/1968 – List entry ID – 1039665 & 1039666). The Listing details for the group of buildings comprise:
1. **GEORGE ROW 5327 County Hall (Formerly listed as Court House, West Wing)**

2. **C18 house rebuilt 1845 by James Milne. Remodelling by Edmund Law, 1890, further alterations by Aston Webb circa 1900. Ashlar. 2 storeys with dentil cornice to entablature, blocking course. Rusticated ground floor with Tuscan pilasters. 1st floor Roman Ionic half columns. 5 sash windows, ground floor round heads with mask keystones, 1st floor eared architrave surrounds under alternate segmental and triangular pediments on consoles, central pediment broken, all beneath oblong panels with swags in relief. Interior: half oval council chamber by Edmund Law, 1890; entrance hall, octagon room and staircase by Aston Webb.**

Judge's Lodgings, Sessions House, County Hall, County Council Offices & Nos 8, 8A, 9 & 9A form a group.

And:

1. **GEORGE ROW 5327 County Council Offices SP 7560 SE 4/133 9.12.68. (Formerly the Old Gaol) II GV 2. 1791-4 by Robert Furze Brettingham; enlarged by James Milne, 1846. Ashlar, hipped Welsh slated roof. 3 storeys, recessed west wing. North elevation has 5:3 sash windows in reveals under flat arches. Cornice, 2nd floor level cornice band.**

Judge’s Lodgings, Sessions House, County Hall, County Council Offices & Nos 8, 8A, 9 & 9A form a group.

2.4 The site is located in a proposed pedestrian priority area, an existing business use area and the All Saints Conservation Area. The Character Statement for The All Saints Conservation Area predominantly concentrates on the buildings and area around Market Square (to the north of the site); however, George Row and the County Council complex do feature:

‘George Row contains a handsome group of buildings, including the Grade I Listed Sessions House, built at the same time as the Church and flanked by the Judges Lodgings, County Hall, and nos. 8-9a, all Grade II*.’

2.5 The part of the County Council complex subject to this Listed Building consent is located to the rear of the main buildings fronting George Row, and appears to be a later addition. The area of roof in question measures 78m² and is finished in Welsh slate. It is noted that no special regard is paid to this area of roof in the Listing descriptions.

3. **PLANNING POLICY**

3.1 The starting point for assessing development proposals is the Development Plan. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states “if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.” The Development Plan for this proposal consists of the Core Strategy and saved policies from the Local Plan.
3.2 In addition, the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework is an important material consideration for determining planning applications along with supplementary guidance produced by the Local Planning Authority.

**West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Adopted December 2014)**

3.3 **Policy SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** – When considering development proposals the relevant Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals for sustainable development will be approved and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

3.4 Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in other local plans and neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.5 **Policy N1 – The Regeneration of Northampton:** The regeneration of Northampton will be supported by a focus on Northampton’s town centre and central area for office, retail, leisure and service development, providing high quality urban design and public realm and protecting its heritage assets and historic character through managed change.

3.6 **Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles - Development will:**

i) protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment and heritage assets and their settings;

3.7 **Policy BN5 – The Historic Environment and Landscape – Designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance and contribution to West Northamptonshire’s local distinctiveness and sense of place.**

3.8 In environments where valued heritage assets are at risk, the asset and its setting will be appropriately conserved and managed.

3.9 In order to secure and enhance the significance of the area's heritage assets and their settings and landscapes, development in areas of landscape sensitivity and/or known historic or heritage significance will be required to:

1. Sustain and enhance the heritage and landscape features which contribute to the character of the area including:

   a) Conservation Areas;
   b) significant historic landscapes including historic parkland, battlefields and ridge and furrow;
   c) the skyline and landscape settings of towns and villages;
   d) sites of known or potential heritage or historic significance;
   e) locally and nationally important buildings, structures and monuments.
2. Demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development on surrounding heritage assets and their setting in order to minimise harm to these assets; where loss of historic features or archaeological remains is unavoidable and justified, provision should be made for recording and the production of a suitable archive and report.

3. Be sympathetic to locally distinctive landscape features, design styles and materials in order to contribute to a sense of place.

The retention and sensitive re-use of disused or underused heritage assets and structures is encouraged in order to retain and reflect the distinctiveness of the environment, contribute to the sense of place and promote the sustainable and prudent use of natural resources.

Proposals to sustain and enhance the area’s understanding of heritage assets, for tourism and historic interest as part of cultural, leisure and green networks will be supported.

**Northampton Local Plan (Saved Policies) (Adopted 1997)**

3.10 Local Plan Policy E23 (Historic Buildings) is not a saved Policy and has been replaced by Policy BN5 from the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and national guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.11 Policy E26 Conservation Areas - Development and Advertisements: Planning permission for development, or express consent for advertisements, in Conservation Areas will be granted so long as the development:

a) preserves or enhances the character and appearance of those areas;

b) does not include the demolition of any building or buildings which make a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the area, and are capable of appropriate alternative use.

**Central Area Action Plan - CAAP (adopted January 2013)**

3.12 Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development - When considering development proposals within the Central Area, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council will always work positively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that development proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of Northampton Central Area and the wider Borough.

**The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (henceforth referred to as ‘The Framework’)**

3.13 The Framework was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a whole range of Government policy. The document sets out the up to date national policy position and must, therefore, be used in the determination of this planning application. The most relevant sections are highlighted below.
3.14 To enable the determination of applications, the significance of any heritage assets affected needs to be described as part of the supporting information. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance (paragraph 128).

3.15 Paragraph 131 states that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses, consistent with their conservation. It also identifies the desirability of new development, making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

3.16 When considering the impact of a proposed development or the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Any harm or loss to heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 132).

3.17 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (paragraph 134).


3.18 The guidelines set out in 2008 by English Heritage in The Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment include the following principles:

3.19 New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

a) There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposals on the significance of the place;

b) The proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;

c) The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;

d) The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is no planning history of relevance to the application site.

5. APPLICATION PROPOSAL

5.1 Listed Building Consent is sought to re-roof an existing slate roof to the rear of the main façade of building fronting George Row (area of roof in question identified on drawing no. 02). The existing slate tiles will be removed, and new 20” x 10” slates will be laid over treated timber battens. In addition, a new lead roll ridge is proposed to replace the existing ridge tiles.
5.2 Further, permission is sought to replace the existing guttering with 100mm half rounded powder coated aluminium, and to replace an existing section of SVP pipe with black PVC to match the main section of SVP.

5.3 Finally, the works would involve the removal of an existing ridge vent cowl, and lead overflow pipe, and would replace the existing timber door and cill on the end elevation of the roof with a new timber door and cill.

6. JUSTIFICATION

Principle / Need for the Proposed Works

6.1 Many of the existing slates are broken and have started to slip from the roof. The area of roof is situated above the inner courtyard, which is a site for congregation at the core of the complex. Therefore, the existing roof represents a health and safety issue which the replacement roof would address in a sympathetic manner.

6.2 In addition, the proposed works would involve the removal of existing non-historic roof fittings (i.e. lead overflow pipe, ridge vent cowl and PVC rainwater goods), and where necessary replacement with more traditional and sympathetic alternatives. It should be noted that slate tiles across the complex are mixed in size and type, as a result of historic extensions and repair work and the area of roof subject to this application is no exception.

Heritage & Impact on the Significance of the Building

Significance

6.3 As set out above, the area of roof subject to this application does not feature specifically in the Listing descriptions for the complex, and therefore, in our view, is primarily of significance because of its historic interest and its group value with the other buildings on the site. In isolation, the area of roof has limited archaeological interest, while fine for a roof of its time, we suggest that the area of roof is not unusual or unique, and as such compared to the wider character and value of the County Council complex, its overall architectural and artistic interest is only moderate. Notwithstanding that, the area of roof forms part of the County Council complex which is of significant architectural, historic and social value, and therefore any alterations or works to the area of roof should be carefully planned and considered.

Impact upon the Setting

6.4 The area of roof is largely concealed from public viewpoints, and given it is set back from the main façade fronting George Row is not discernible from this street scene. Part of the roof is visible from the inner court yard, at the core of the site; however, subject to the proposed works being appropriate to character and historic integrity of the building, the development would not harm the visual amenity or appearance of the Statutory Listed Building or surrounding Conservation Area.
Replacement Roof (including new lead roll ridge)

6.5 The proposed re-roofing works would be carried out in a sensitive manner to ensure the historic and architectural importance of the building is maintained. The physical features that justify the buildings designation as a Listed Building; would not be altered and nor would the building’s setting.

6.6 The proposed works would not see the pitch of the roof altered nor the height increased. Likewise, the length and width of the roof would not be extended. The proposed works would not therefore alter the shape or scale of the roof, and would only comprise the replacement of the existing tiles.

6.7 Roof tiles across the complex of buildings are predominantly Welsh slate but vary in age, type and size as a result of previous extension works and repairs. It is believed the 24” x 12” slates are the oldest at the site; however, the majority on this part of the building are 20” x 10” (Welsh slate). In this regard, 20” x 10” replacement Welsh slates have been selected, given they would closely follow the proportions and size of the majority of existing slates on this part of the site; samples of the proposed slate could be provided at the conditions stage. This would ensure the proposed finish is traditional and therefore sympathetic to the historic character and appearance of the building. The best 24” x 12” slates removed would be stock piled as part of the works and retained for future repair works across the site.

6.8 The existing tiles would be removed carefully ensuring the historic fabric of the building and any features of special interest remain unharmed. The proposed tiles would be laid over new 50mm x 25mm treated timbers battens, leaving the existing timber boarding in situ. This would ensure the historic fabric of the building is unharmed both externally and internally. The existing ridge tiles would be removed and replaced with a new lead roll ridge. This type of finish is both traditional and sympathetic to the age and character of the building.

Replacement Guttering and Timber Door

6.9 The existing grey PVC guttering is not traditional nor is it in-keeping with the age or character of the building. Consequently, removing this and replacing it with a more sensitive and suitable black powder coated aluminium gutter would only serve to enhance and preserve the character of the building and the visual amenity of the surrounding Conservation Area.

6.10 The proposed timber door and frame would be like for like replacements and would substitute an existing timber door which has been in situ for a considerable period of time. In addition, a new timber cill would be installed. Both additions would be consistent with the character and appearance of the building and would utilise traditional natural materials.

Removal of Existing Roof Fittings

6.11 Removal of the existing lead overflow pipe, which is no longer required given the existing tanks have been removed, and the ridge vent cowl, would unclutter the roof scape and therefore would enhance the historic appearance of the existing roof. The existing roof light would be retained, and no works are proposed to this feature, however given this is existing no additional harm would result.
7. **CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 Listed Building Consent is sought to re-roof an existing slate roof at Northampton County Council Offices, as well as the removal of existing roof fittings, replacement gutters and a new timber door and cill.

7.2 Many of the existing slates are broken and have slipped and therefore represent a health and safety hazard given the buildings proximity to public areas. The proposed Welsh slates have been carefully selected so they are consistent with the existing Welsh slates and roof finishes across the County Council complex. Likewise, the removal of existing incongruous roof features would enhance the appearance of the roof scape, as would replacing the existing PVC guttering with black powder coated aluminium alternatives. The replacement timber door and cill would be “like for like” replacements, and the proposed materials would be natural and traditional.

7.3 The proposed works would have no adverse effects on the historic integrity of the Listed Building and it’s setting, nor to any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

7.4 The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Core Strategy, Development Plan and Central Area Action Plan policies.