HERITAGE STATEMENT

Installation of stud partition walls to subdivide an existing office to create two offices at Kettering Library, Sheep Street, Kettering NN16 0AY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a Listed Building Consent application for the installation of three stud partition walls to subdivide an existing office to create two offices at Kettering Library, Sheep Street, Kettering.

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 Conservation Areas, and their setting. 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 Kettering Library is located on the east side of Sheep Street, Kettering. Sheep Street is one of the main shopping thoroughfares into Kettering Town Centre, located to the south of Market Place and High Street. The site is located outside of the established shopping area, but falls within the Town Centre and Conservation Area boundaries. Furthermore, the building is Grade II Listed.

Extract from the Kettering Borough Council Proposals Map (application site circled in red)
2.2 Kettering Library is one of the Town’s most eye-catching and historic buildings. Designed by Goddard, Paget and Carlow, the building was made possible by a gift of £8,000 from Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish American Industrialist, who broke his usual practice of anonymity to open the building in person in 1904. Built of red brick with Ketton Stone dressings it has a Collyweston slate roof. At its opening Andrew Carnegie described the building as a “jewelled casket of learning” and today it is one of the busiest libraries in the County, with an average of 800 visitors every day.

2.3 The building was first designated in April 1976 (14/04/1976 – List entry ID – 1051643). The Listing details for the building state:

“1904 by Goddard, Paget and Catlow in Arts and Crafts manner. Red brick, stone dressings, Collyweston slated roof with three gables. 1 storey, projecting ends, slighty projecting centre with elliptically chamfered arched wide entrance up stone steps. Mullioned and transomed casement windows. Central lantern and cupola astride roof ridge.”

“Public Library, Art Gallery, Alfred East Monument and Dryland Fountain form a group.”

2.4 The building is single storey in height and has a fully pitched gabled roof. It is constructed of red brick with stone dressings and a Collyweston slate roof. The Sheep Street elevation features two forward projecting gables situated either side of a wide arched entranceway, with stone steps leading up from the street. The entranceway features a smaller gable projection and is finished in stone, with carved details and red brick highlights. Each of the forward projecting gables feature a large five light bay window. At its base the building is surrounded by a red brick plinth with a stone trim.
2.5 The north elevation of the building has three pitched gables each inset with a tall three light window. All of the windows at the building are mullion and transom casement, with carved stone surrounds.

2.6 The south elevation has two central projecting gables. Unlike the front and north elevations it features arched windows and a parapet wall running the depth of the building. Part of the original side elevation has been covered by the link extension to the adjacent Alfred East Art Gallery building. With regard to surrounding properties, the library is the focus of a fine civic group, with the Dryland fountain (circa 1907), the neoclassical Alfred East Art Gallery (1913) and Kettering’s war memorial (1921), all of which are Grade-Il listed.

2.7 The library opens seven days a week. As well as lending books, it provides internet access, audiobooks, e-books, CDs, DVDs and runs a number of community clubs including rhyme times, educational classes for children, a drop-in session for advice on self-employment and a knit “n” chat group. It therefore forms an important and valuable resource for the local community.

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 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2016), Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (adopted 2011) and saved policies from the Local Plan (adopted 1995).

3.2 In addition, the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is an important material consideration for determining planning applications along with supplementary guidance produced by the Local Planning Authority.
3.3 Policy 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) – when considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority 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 the applicants to find solutions which mean proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area, meeting the challenges of climate change and protecting and enhancing the provision of ecosystem services.

To be regarded as ‘sustainable’ within the context of North Northamptonshire, development should contribute to delivering the Plan Vision and Outcomes through compliance with the relevant policies of the Plan. Development that conflicts with policies of the Plan will be refused, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where a development is otherwise acceptable but an independent viability appraisal demonstrates that certain policy standards cannot be achieved, the Local Planning Authority will work with the applicant to consider alternative approaches to deliver the desired policy outcomes.

3.4 Policy 2 (Historic Environment) – the distinctive North Northamptonshire Historic Environment will be protected, preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. Where a development would impact upon a heritage asset and/or its setting:

a) proposals should conserve and, where possible, enhance the heritage significance and setting of an asset or group of heritage assets in a manner commensurate to its significance

b) proposals should complement their surrounding historic environment through the form, scale, design and materials

c) proposals should protect and, where possible, enhance key views and vistas of heritage assets, including of the church spires along the Nene Valley and across North Northamptonshire

d) proposals should demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development on heritage assets and their setting in order to minimise harm to these assets and their setting. 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

e) where appropriate, flexible solutions to the re-use of buildings and conservation of other types of heritage assets at risk will be encouraged, especially, where this will result in their removal from the ‘at risk’ register

3.5 Policy 7 (Community Services and Facilities) – development should support and enhance community services and facilities, where appropriate by:-

a) providing on site where necessary or contributing towards accessible, new or enhanced community services and facilities to meet the needs arising from the
development, utilising, where possible, opportunities for the co-location of facilities or the use of existing suitable sites

c) safeguarding existing facilities unless it can be demonstrated that:-

i. They are no longer viable and

ii. no longer needed by the community they serve and

iii. are not needed for any other community use or that the facility is being relocated and improved to meet the needs of the new and existing community

Central Area Action Plan - CAAP (adopted 2011)

3.6 Policy 12 (Heritage Conservation & Archaeology) – new development within the Plan area boundary will preserve or enhance the existing historic environment in terms of:-

a. Listed buildings and their settings and
b. buildings which form an integral part of the designated Kettering Conservation Area and their settings and
c. sites with archaeological interest

Kettering Local Plan (Saved Policies) (Adopted 1995)

3.7 There are no saved policies relevant to this application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

3.8 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.

3.9 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).

3.10 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.

3.11 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. Any harm or loss to heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 132).

3.12 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).
3.13 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:

- 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 to prejudice alternative solutions in the future

4. APPLICATION PROPOSAL

4.1 Listed Building Consent is sought to install three stud partition walls within the existing office to create two new offices.

4.2 The existing office measures 32.8 square metres. It currently has two points of access from the main library display area. It also has two windows which open into an existing courtyard. An existing store room is accessed off of the office.
4.3 The existing office would be subdivided horizontally and a new lobby area created, providing access to the proposed offices and existing store room. The new walls would be formed of 70mm Gypsum Acoustic C studs at 600mm centres with two layers of 15mm soundbloc sides and 50mm Isover acoustic partition roll. The existing door on the west side of the room would be locked and an infill stud partition would be installed.

4.4 Each of the offices would be fitted with a door and side vision panel. Skirting is proposed to the new walls. The doorway serving the existing office would be adjusted so that the middle post and side light open for disabled access.
New door and vision panel for each of the offices

4.5 The existing timber flooring would be protected during the course of the works and upon completion would be cleaned and polished. The existing walls and ceiling would be repainted, and the new stud walls would be painted with matching white emulsion.

5. **JUSTIFICATION**

**Principle**

5.1 Kettering Library was built as a ‘public library’ and opened in 1904. It has been used as a public library for the entirety of the intervening period and its significance is enhanced by the fact that it has survived so well in such a prominent position. The building is therefore historically important, but also socially, providing a valuable resource to the local population.

5.2 Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy supports the sensitive use of heritage assets and structures to secure their long-term protection. This approach is reinforced at a national level by the NPPF which emphasises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. In addition, Policy 7 of the Joint Core Strategy states development should support and enhance community services and facilities.

5.3 The proposed works would make better use of the existing floor space, enhancing the current facilities on offer. They would create two new offices, providing meeting rooms for members of the public. Consequently, the proposed development would benefit the local community (users of the Library), whilst also securing the building’s preservation as a community resource for the long term future. The proposal would therefore represent a sustainable form of development in accordance with the provisions of Policies 1 and 2 (e) of the Joint Core Strategy, which encourage appropriate solutions for the flexible re-use of buildings, and paragraph 131 of the NPPF which states heritage assets should be put to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
Heritage and Impact on the Significance of the Building

Impact upon the Setting

5.4 The significance and special interest of the building lies within its external façade and social context within the Town. The proposed development would not affect the exterior of the building, comprising internal works only, and therefore would not impact on the significance or setting of the heritage asset when viewed externally from Sheep Street. The proposal would therefore comply with the provisions of Policy 2 (a) of the Joint Core Strategy and 12 (a) of the Central Area Action Plan, which aim to conserve the heritage significance and setting of an asset.

Impact upon the Building

5.5 The proposed works would be carried out in a sensitive manner to ensure the historic and architectural importance of the building is maintained. They do not seek to remove any internal details or material, and all features that justify the building’s designation as a Listed asset would be unaffected by the proposal.

5.6 The internal works involve the construction of three new stud partition walls. A frame would be constructed and fixed to the existing walls, floor and ceiling. The stud partitions would then sit within the frame.

5.7 It is accepted that the proposed works would alter the internal layout of the existing room; however, the original walls and openings would remain as existing. The proposed installations would not be permanent, and the partitions would be fully demountable ensuring the room can be returned to its existing form at the necessary time. The works are therefore completely reversible and would not impact adversely the original layout of the building.

5.8 It should be noted that the proposal to subdivide the existing office is not an attempt to modernise the building’s interior. Instead, it seeks to make better use of a currently underutilised space at the Library without impacting on the historic fabric or integrity of the building, providing an upgrade to the existing facilities and services on offer. The proposal would therefore fully accord with the provisions of both local and national policy which encourage flexible solutions for the re-use of buildings (or part of a building in this case), where they are sympathetic to the character and historic integrity of the asset.

5.9 The partitions would be carefully positioned to avoid conflict with the existing windows and openings at the room. The space between the existing windows provides a natural point of subdivision for the two offices. Therefore the frame and stud partitions can be installed without disrupting the glazing or existing detailing surrounding the windows.

5.10 The frame would be attached to the walls, floor and ceiling using limited fixings enabling ease of restoration when dismantled. They can therefore be installed without harming the fabric of the building. Furthermore, as set out above, given the nature of the partitions and the limited number of fixings required, the works are completely reversible.

5.11 The new walls would have an acceptable finished appearance, sympathetic to the character of the inside of the existing building; white emulsion with skirting details. During the course of the works the existing timber floor would be protected and polished on completion. In addition, the existing walls would be repainted using matching white emulsion. The
proposed works would therefore preserve any features of special architectural or historic interest. Further details of the proposed finish can be provided at conditions stage if necessary.

5.12 The existing door on the west side of the room would be locked shut and a protective film placed over the glass. An infill stud partition would then be installed using an identical frame system, meaning the works are reversible, having no impact on the historic fabric of the building.

5.13 The new doors and vision panels would be inserted within the stud partitions only and therefore would have no impact on the historic fabric of the building.

5.14 The new furniture would be superficial, and would not need to be fixed to the existing floor or walls. It therefore could be easily removed.

5.15 As a result, the proposed works would have a neutral impact on the original building, and would conserve all features of historic significance or interest in accordance with Policy 2 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy, Policy 12 of the Central Area Action Plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Listed Building Consent is sought to install three stud partition walls within the existing office to create two new offices.

6.2 The proposed works would rejuvenate this part of the building, making better use of the existing space and enhancing the current facilities on offer. Consequently, the proposed development would benefit the local community (users of the Library), whilst also securing the building’s preservation as a community resource for the long term future.

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

6.4 The proposal complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Core Strategy and Central Area Action Plan policies.
PROPOSED INTERNAL REFURBISHMENT WORKS
AT KETTERING LIBRARY
FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Northamptonshire County Council’s Registration Service has the statutory duty to register all life events that happen in the county under various legislation including the Birth and Death Registration Act 1953, the Marriage Acts 1837 and 1949 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

Other legislation such as the Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016 also apply at times during registration appointments.

The legislation requires that life events are conducted within certain timescales, which are measured by the regulator via KPIs. These events are:

- Births
- Stillbirths
- Deaths
- Marriages
- Civil partnerships

The registration is achieved by the customer attending the registration office in person and being interviewed by a registrar, superintendent registrar (SR) or their deputy, who gathers relevant facts and records them in a register. A successful register entry will need to be signed by the customer(s) before the registrar can issue a birth or death certificate or start the waiting period before a marriage or civil partnership can be conducted.

This information is collected on behalf of the Registrar General (RG), DWP and the Home Office by county council employees acting as statutory officers during the registration event. Due to the private and sensitive nature of the information sought by the registrar, the RG, DWP and HO expect that the customers will be afforded privacy, and not overheard by others, and therefore registration appointments across England and Wales are conducted in private offices occupied by one registrar or SR and their customer(s).

In Kettering, the volume of life events for the residents of the town has necessitated two full-time registrars/SRs for a number of years and this proposal is to create two private offices for the two staff to conduct their interviews in privacy, both acoustically and visually. If the space were not sub-divided, it could be used by only one registrar, which would be an inefficient use of space and we would need to build another office elsewhere in the library to accommodate the second registrar. This proposal makes the most efficient and discreet use of the space for both registrars and will ensure that the residents of Kettering can continue to fulfil their statutory duty to register their life events in a timely way. Without two offices, the Registration Service would fail the residents of Kettering, caused by a reduction in registrar capacity leading to missed deadlines and/or the residents having to travel to register their life events in another town.

Solid timber doors have been selected for privacy and sound quality due to the nature of the conversations within the rooms. Building Control will require a vision panel to the side with integral blinds to give the occupiers vision options depending on the clients requirements.

The walls are demountable and will be fixed into the walls only. No fixing will be permitted into the existing timber floor.

The design will allow the privacy required for such rooms as well as not altering the internal feel of the Library. Viewed internally from inside the main Library there is no visual alterations to the current room.
INTERNAL VIEW OF ROOM / DOORS.

RIGHT HAND SIDE IS THE EXISTING ACTIVE LEAF.

LEFT HAND SIDE HAS EXISTING HINGES ETC BUT IS CURRENTLY EITHER NAILLED OR GLUED CLOSED.

WORKS TO DOORS

UN-HAUL OR STICK LEFTHAND DOOR SO IT OPENS AGAIN.

CUT CENTRE FRAME OUT AND MAKE GOOD FLOOR + HEAD FRAME.

ADHERE CENTRE POST TO SLAVE LEAF SO WHEN CLOSED IT LOOKS NO DIFFERENT TO THE EXISTING ABOVE PHOTO.

NO DRAWING ISSUED SINCE THE DRAWING DOES NOT SHOW ANYTHING.
Door to side to have obscure film to glass and stud wall behind to close off opening. (Similar to other closed off door behind the book display).

Existing door made into double doors for disabled access. All existing materials re-used. Center mullion to swing with slave leaf.

Retained doors behind book display. Door to safe.
No works to either.

New furniture and blinds.
All existing timber floor / walls / ceiling to remain as existing.