

## PREVIOUS REPORT TO PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY PANEL

Southampton City Planning & Sustainability  
 Planning and Rights of Way Panel meeting 16 March 2010  
 Planning Application Report of the Head of Division

Application address Chief Executive Southampton City Council Civic Centre, Civic Centre Road SO14 7LY			
Proposed development Change of use of the courts and police block of the Civic Centre into a Sea City Museum with associated alterations and extensions at roof level and to the north side of the building.			
Application number	10/00020/R3CFL	Application type	Regulation 3
Case officer	Jenna Turner	Application category	Q18 - Other minor

<b>Recommendation Summary</b>	<b>Delegate to the Development Control Manager to grant planning permission subject to criteria listed in report (Regulation 3 application)</b>
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Reason for Panel consideration	Application submitted on behalf of Southampton City Council and which affects a Grade II* Listed Building
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Applicant Southampton City Council Leisure Services	Agent Wilkinson Eyre Architects
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Date of receipt	21.01.2010	City Ward	Bargate
Date of registration	21.01.2010	Ward members	Cllr Bogle
Publicity expiry date	25.02.2010		Cllr Damani
Date to determine by	18.03.2010 <b>OVER</b>		Cllr Willacy

Site area		Usable amenity area	N/A
Density - whole site	N/A	Landscaped areas	N/A
Site coverage (developed area)	N/A		

Residential mix	numbers	size sq.m	Other land uses	class
Studio / 1-bedroom	N/A	N/A	Commercial use	N/A
2-bedroom	N/A	N/A	Retail use	N/A
3-bedroom	N/A	N/A	Leisure use	D2 - Museum

accessibility zone	high	policy parking max	N / A spaces
parking permit zone	no	existing site parking	50 spaces
cyclist facilities	yes	parking proposed	50 spaces
motor & bicycles	Not determined	disabled parking	0 spaces

Key submitted documents supporting application:	
Design and Access Statement	Ecological Appraisal Report
Statement of Community Involvement	Transport Assessment
Sustainability Checklist	Sustainability Statement
Site Waste Management Plan	

Appendix attached			
1	Local Plan Policy schedule	2	Suggested conditions

## Recommendation in full

Delegate the Development Control Manager to grant planning approval subject to

1. the Head of Leisure giving a written undertaking for the provision of the following:
  - a) Confirmation from English Heritage that they raise no objection to the application;
  - b) Submission of a Tree Replacement Management Plan, including 2 for 1 replacement tree planting and off-site, in accordance with Policies CS22, CS23 & CS25 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document - Adopted Version (January 2010) and the adopted SPG relating to Planning Obligations (August 2005 as amended);
  - c) Site specific highway improvements in the vicinity of the site in accordance with polices CS18, CS19 & CS25 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document - Adopted Version (January 2010) and the adopted SPG relating to Planning Obligations (August 2005 as amended);
  - d) Management Plan committing to adopting local labour and employment initiatives, in accordance with Policies CS24 & CS25 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document - Adopted Version (January 2010) and the adopted SPG relating to Planning Obligations (August 2005 as amended).

## Procedural Context

### Councils Own Development

The proposed scheme is a Regulation 3 application for Full Permission. A Regulation 3 application relates to proposals made by the Local Authority (in this case as the Public Leisure Service) for development that it wishes to undertake as part of its remit as a public sector service provider.

It is general practice that following the proper assessment of the planning merits of the proposal that Regulation 3 applications should be either approved if considered acceptable, or the application should be requested to be withdrawn if not considered acceptable for justifiable planning reasons that would normally result in a refusal.

## Background

The Civic Centre is a Grade II\* Listed building designed by Berry Webber following a design competition. The complex of buildings was designed in the neo-classical modern style and is a steel framework building clad in Portland Stone. The Law Courts block, which contains the landmark clock tower, was the second section of the Civic Centre complex to be constructed after the Municipal block and was completed in 1933. There have been no significant previous alterations to this section of the building.

The Law Courts front Havelock Road and to the north of the building is West Watts Park which is part of English Heritage's register of parks and gardens of special historic interest. The Magistrates Courts moved from the Law Courts to Rockstone Place in 2001 and since

this time has been used as storage and meeting room space in association with the offices within the Municipal Block.

## **Proposed Development & Surrounding Context**

The application proposes the alteration and extension of the existing law courts within the Civic Centre to provide a museum of Southampton's maritime history.

As well as a maritime exhibition, the museum would also incorporate a Titanic exhibition, special exhibition space and educational facilities. It is intended that the museum be open for public use by April 2012 to coincide with the centenary of the sinking of the Titanic.

### Phases

The development of the museum would take place in two phases; the current applications (for planning permission and Listed Building consent) relate to Phase 1 works which includes the alterations to the entrance, the pavilion extension to the north of the building and the rooftop extension. Phase 2 relates to the lower ground floor and the northern end of the ground floor which will continue to be occupied by the police until April 2011.

An application for Listed Building Consent has also been submitted, which will consider the internal alterations to the building including the demolition works.

### Pavilion extension

The main entrance and exit to the museum would be through the existing grand entrance on Havelock Road. The existing internal ground floor level is higher than pavement level and the existing entrance comprises external and internal flights of steps which link the pavement level with the internal ground floor. As part of this proposal, the existing entrance would be remodelled to create a level access to the lower ground floor of the building. The works to the entrance also include the extension of the existing screen around the entrance downwards and the provision of new entrance doors within a stone portal.

The lower ground floor of the building would contain the ticketing area, cafe and shop. At this level, a glazed link would provide access to the special exhibition space that would be contained within the pavilion extension building.

The pavilion would be a single storey structure, positioned to the north side of the building, occupying the existing irregularly shaped grassed landscaped bounded by a low Portland stone wall and contains 3 young trees. There is a notable change in levels at this point, with the land sloping up from the northern end of the building towards Havelock Road.

The pavilion extension would provide an additional 500sqm of exhibition space. The massing of the extension is shown to be broken into three interlocking bays and attached to the existing building by a subordinate glazed link section. It is proposed that the extension itself be finished in reconstituted stone cladding and semi-translucent glazing. A separate entrance would be provided within the glazed linked structure to enable the special exhibition area to be accessed independently from the rest of the museum. A hard landscaped area would be provided around the perimeter of the pavilion.

The proposed rooftop extension which would shroud plant and equipment would also enable the enclosure of the existing prisoner exercise yard to create a triple height exhibition space. The roof extension would be set back approximately 2.5m from the western roof parapet and 8m from the north and south roof parapets. The extension would be just over 3m in height and would be finished in reconstituted stone cladding system and

opaque glazing, to match to pavilion extension.

### Setting

The proposal also involves the closure of the Havelock Road spur to general traffic and the removal of the existing metered parking bays from this area. This would enable the provision of a coach drop-off area which would accommodate two coaches at any one time and 3 taxi bays in front of the pavilion extension. The spur would operate a one way for the coaches and taxis. The road closure would be demarcated by signage, bollards and a contrasting road surface treatment. It is proposed to construct a build-out to the south-west corner of the Havelock Road spur which would accommodate visitor cycle storage. The road closure itself would require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Servicing and would take place from the eastern side of the building via loading doors in the back of the pavilion extension. Refuse and cycle storage would be provided internally to the south of the building and would be accessed by the existing internal service courtyard.

### Operation

The museum would be open 364 days a year, with the exception being Christmas Day, between the hours of 10:00 and 17:00 and it is anticipated that it would attract 157,000 visitors on an annual basis.

### **Relevant Planning Policy**

Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy supports further leisure development within city centre locations and promotes the creation of a cultural quarter in the Northern Above Bar Area. This is supported by saved policy MSA5 of the Local Plan Review which encourages the development of the Civic Centre and Guildhall Square as a mixed-use cultural quarter. The planning policy to be considered as part of this proposal is scheduled in **Appendix 1** to this report.

### **Relevant Planning History**

No relevant applications

### **Consultation Responses & Notification Representations**

A publicity exercise in line with department procedures was undertaken which included notifying adjoining and nearby landowners, placing a press advertisement and erecting a site notice. At the time of writing the report, **4** representations had been received from interested parties which include, Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society and the City of Southampton Society.

### Summary of Representations made

**Impact of the pavilion extension** – The design and positioning of the proposed pavilion, forward of the northern building line of the Civic, would be unsympathetic with the existing building. The extension should defer to the Civic in terms of its design, as do many of the buildings built in the vicinity of it. The extension would adversely affect the symmetry of the building and diminish the impact of the clock tower. The loss of the grassed area is also regrettable as this provides an attractive setting to the building.

**Impact of the entrance** - The works to the entrance would erode its grandeur and have a damaging impact on the building. There is insufficient width to the pavement to

accommodate groups that may congregate outside the entrance.

**Impact of the roof extension** - The height of the roof extension will unbalance the scale of the west elevation of the building and detract from the entrance.

**Location of the museum** - The siting of a maritime museum in a location which does not have strong physical, historical or visual links to the waterfront is philosophically incorrect.

**Impact on the Listed Parks** - The Civic Centre provides a positive setting and backdrop to the Listed Parks and the proposed pavilion extension would detract from this. In addition to this, the pavilion extension would detract from the library entrance to the building when viewed from the parks.

### Summary of Consultation comments

**SCC Highways** - Improved pedestrian crossing facilities are required to address pedestrians crossing Havelock Road. Further details of the measures to prevent traffic using the Havelock Road spur are required as well as details of how the proposal would improve and link into existing cycle network.

**SCC Archaeology** – No objection. Suggests the imposition of conditions to secure a written scheme of archaeological investigation, an archaeological work programmes and to carry out a record of the building prior to the commencement of works.

**SCC Ecology** - No objection. Suggests a condition to ensure no adverse impact to bats during the removal of trees.

**SCC Sustainability** - No objection. The development should achieve BREEAM Very Good.

**SCC Trees** - No objection to the removal of the trees since they are not significant amenity features. Suggests that replacement trees are secured for planting off-site, at a 2 for 1 ratio.

**SCC City Design** - No objection. The proposed pavilion extension would be an exciting and dynamic contrast to the existing building which would sit well in its context. The interventions to the entrance could work well from a design perspective. Suggest further information is required with respect to the proposed materials and the detailing of the roof enclosure.

**BAA** - No objection. Suggests adding an informative to the decision notice to make the developers aware of the Code of Practice relating to the use of cranes.

### **Planning Consideration Key Issues**

The key issues for consideration in the determination of this planning application are:

- The principle of development
- The impact on the special historical and architectural character of the building
- The impact on transport infrastructure
- The impact of the proposal on surrounding land uses

#### 1. Principle of Development

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment advises that the best way to secure the upkeep of listed buildings is to ensure that they remain in active use. The Courts will be

vacated in autumn 2010 and it important to secure an appropriate use for this substantial Listed Building before this time. The building itself is no longer fit for its intended function and the continuation of the Law Courts as a public building is welcomed.

The proposed museum would play in an important part in the realisation of a 'Cultural Quarter' in this northern Above Bar area. Core Strategy and Local Plan policies support the principle of leisure facilities within city centre locations; the site is within walking distance of the central train station and well served by bus stops. The provision of a museum in this location would provide a valuable cultural facility for the city's residents and visitors.

## 2. Character and Design Issues

### Pavilion Extension

The proposed pavilion extension has been designed to respond to the varied land levels and irregular shape of the plot. The footprint of the building follows the tapered nature of the plot, whilst the roof apexes of each of the 3 bays ascend slightly towards to northern boundary. The use of the interlocking bays provides articulation to the built form, alleviating the massing whilst acting as a subtle reference to the maritime nature of the museum. The extension defers to the Civic Centre in its height.

The subordinate glazed link between the pavilion and the Civic provides sufficient separation between the original and the new, allowing the extension to read as a neighbour and providing clarity between the two elements. It is because the pavilion would read as a separate entity to the Civic Centre that would allow the symmetry and grace of the original building to prevail.

The façade of the extension would be finished in stone cladding and glazing, separated by a diagonal crease which would provide lightness to its appearance. The upper and lower sections of the façade slope in different directions, giving visual breaks within the elevation.

A hard landscaped finish is proposed to the perimeter of the extension which follows the topography of the land and reflects the elevation treatment of the extension. This will provide an effective setting for the new building.

Overall, it is considered that the addition would appear as an exciting and high quality addition to the building that would enhance the setting of the Civic Centre and help raise the profile of the new museum facility.

### Roof Extension

Two rooftop additions that would provide plant-room accommodation would be positioned either side of the base of the clock tower. The extensions would appear as symmetrical additions and therefore would not detract from the overall balance of the building. The enclosure would be set back from the roof parapet and being single-storey in scale and would not be unduly prominent when viewed from public vantage points. The additions would be the same height of the lower plinth of the base of the clock tower, which ensures it integrates into the fabric of the building. It is also important to note that the Law Courts section of the Civic Centre is lower in height than the remainder of the complex of the buildings and as such the addition would not detract from the rest of the building.

The enclosure would be finished in materials to match the proposed pavilion extension and would be sympathetic to the Portland stone of the Civic Centre whilst ensuring that the addition appears as a lightweight and modern structure.

### Entrance alterations

The demolition works associated with the alterations to the entrance will be considered in the Listed Building application.

The proposed alterations to the entrance would enable it continue as the primary entrance to the building and facilitate its use by all visitors to the building. This is fundamental to avoid the segregation of people able to use the steps from those who are not able to use the steps. Having regard to the prominence and importance of the existing entrance, it is crucial that it remains as the principle entrance to the building and its significance is retained.

The application proposes the extension of the existing door screen downwards by one glazed panel either side of the door and this would be a simple solution which would not detract from the existing detailing. The new glazed doors would be positioned within a new a stone portal which reflects the main entrance to the Municipal block.

The new Portland stone paved area will be provided in front of the entrance following the removal of the steps. This would follow the pattern of the removed steps and be at a slight gradient to emphasise the threshold of the entrance.

## 2. Transportation considerations

No car parking spaces would be provided to serve the museum and this is appropriate in such a highly accessible location such of this since it would promote access to the site by more sustainable modes of transport other than the private car. The application is accompanied by a detailed Transport Assessment which demonstrates that anticipated car travel to the museum could be accommodated within the existing city centre car parking provision. A condition is suggested to secure a Sustainable Travel Plan to promote sustainable travel to and from the site. The vehicular movements to and from the site itself, would be less than is currently generated by the existing police operations.

In terms of the removal of the existing car parking spaces within Havelock Road, the submitted information demonstrates that the displaced car parking can also be accommodated within existing city centre car parking provision. Two of the existing car parking bays on Commercial Road would be converted to provide the disabled spaces that would be removed from the Havelock Road spur.

To avoid congestion of the footway outside of the entrance by groups or queues, it is proposed that the internal lobby would serve as a holding area to avoid congregation on the footway which hinders the passage of other users.

## 3. Impact on surrounding land uses

The application site is separate from the nearest residential development and having regard to the proposed hours of operation (10:00 and 17:00), the proposal would not have a harmful impact on residential amenity.

## Summary

The proposed museum represents an exciting opportunity for the city that would make good use of the existing fabric of the Civic Centre; retaining and enhancing the role that the building plays within Southampton.

## **CONCLUSION**

By securing the matters set out in the recommendations section of this report, the proposal

would be acceptable. The application is therefore recommended for delegated approval to the Development Control Manager.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

**Documents used in the preparation of this report Background Papers**

1 (a) (b) (c) (d) 2 (a) (c) (e) 6 (i) (l) 7 (a) (f) (o)

(JT for 16.03.10 PROWP)