



Historic England

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Mr John Ferguson
Collective Planning
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London
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3777

Our ref: PA00418271

6 July 2017

Dear Mr Ferguson

Pre-application Advice

HORNSEY TOWN HALL , LONDON , N8 9JJ

Thank you for consulting Historic England on your pre-application proposals relating to Hornsey Town Hall on behalf of your client, Far East Consortium Limited. We are pleased to hear that you are part of the team appointed to take forward the Hornsey Town Hall redevelopment project, alongside Donald Insall Associates and Make Architects, and that you will now be taking proposals forward to the planning and listed building consent application stage.

In terms of our remit, Historic England has a statutory role in providing expert advice on proposals affecting the built historic environment and recommend the authorisation of listed building consent applications for grade II* listed buildings to the Secretary of State for determination. We are also a consultee on any large planning applications affecting the setting of a grade II* building or conservation area.

Significance

Hornsey Town Hall is a grade II* listed building and is therefore of high heritage significance. The Town Hall was constructed in 1935 to designs by RH Uren and was the first major UK building to be constructed in the modernist style. The building has remained largely unaltered and retains many features of architectural and historic interest, including a number of high quality interiors and finishes, some of which were implemented in association with Heales stores. The building has been vacant for many years, following the dissolution of the borough of Hornsey, and is an entrant on our Heritage At Risk Register for London. We therefore welcome proposals to repair the building and bring it back into a viable new use.

Impact

I have met twice with yourselves in recent months to discuss your emerging proposals for Hornsey Town Hall and the associated land at the rear. Following our most recent site meeting, on site on 3rd July 2017, you have presented updated proposed floor



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plans for the Town Hall for review. These floor plans show the main entrance lobby spaces, the former theatre, Mayor's Office, Committee Chamber and Committee Room being available for community or hotel use and remaining largely unaltered. The upper part of the theatre seating area would be converted to a new function room. The ground floor of the south wing and the first floor of the west wing would be used as co-working spaces. The remaining interiors would be used for food and beverage use or as hotel bedrooms or ancillary facilities. To the east, west and south wings, the proposals would include the retention of much of the existing office corridor spaces and the subdivision of the existing offices to create hotel bedrooms and bathrooms.

On the land at the rear of the Town Hall, you propose two residential blocks, the proportions of which differ in height to those previously granted planning permission as 'Enabling Development' linked to the restoration and reuse of Hornsey Town Hall (Mountview scheme).

Policy

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) set out the obligation on local planning authorities to pay special regard to safeguarding the special interest of listed buildings and their settings, and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for decision making on development proposals. At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development'. Conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance forms one of the 12 core principles that define sustainable development.

Paragraphs 132 and 137 consider the impact of that development on the setting of historic assets.

Paragraphs 133 and 134 advise on cases where proposals would lead to substantial or less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. In both cases, harm needs to be weighed against public benefits, although the tests in 133 for substantial harm are necessarily more rigorous.

Position

It is clear that you have given a great deal of consideration to the significance of the Hornsey Town Hall when formulating your plans for conversion of the building to new uses and this has resulted in proposals that largely retain original fabric and plan form, wherever possible. In our view, the proposals as they are currently shown are unlikely to be contentious in heritage terms, subject to a detailed schedule of works. There is, of course, further detail that is required in respect to extent of repairs to the building,



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servicing and compliance with building regulations and we are happy to discuss these details further at pre-application and condition stages.

In respect to the proposed extensions and external changes to Hornsey Town Hall, we have no objection to the repositioning of the steps to the theatre foyer in order to provide level access across the front of the building. This is providing that existing fabric is reused wherever possible and that the design of the new fabric is seamless with the architecture of the Town Hall. We have no objection to the provision of an external terrace and bar over the existing roof area on the north side of the building, provided that any associated structures are not visible in key views looking towards the Town Hall from The Broadway and can be accommodated without any harmful alterations to the host building. The proposed extensions over the east wing at second floor level appeared to follow the principle set in the extant planning permission for the Town Hall. However, details of the proposed elevational treatment will be needed in order to assess the impact of the proposals on the host building.

Regarding your proposals to re-landscape the front area, we expressed a clear preference for Option 1, which allowed for a partial reinstatement of the original landscaping scheme at the front of the Town Hall, whilst also allowing for renewal of the existing finishes. We would particularly welcome the restoration of the circular fountain and the reinstatement of lamp standards in the style of those that originally existed.

In respect to the new build residential blocks at the rear of the site, we would not wish to comment in detail on those proposals. However, we do acknowledge that the proposed increase in height would result in one of the residential blocks appearing just above the roofline of the Town Hall in views from The Broadway. We welcome the steps that you have taken to reduce the height of this block to the extent that only a small part remains visible. However, we still consider that some harm would result from this proposal which would need to be balanced against the public benefits that would result from the scheme, in accordance with policies within the NPPF. Of course, our preference would be for this element to be reduced in height still further and we would recommend that this option should be explored.

Next Steps

We welcome the progress that has been made in developing your plans in accordance with our advice and look forward to working with you in the future as your plans develop further.

It is our view that your proposed uses for the Town Hall provide a good fit for the building and are unlikely to be contentious in heritage terms, provided that it can be



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shown that these uses are able to secure the repair and long term future and maintenance of the building.

Yours sincerely

Claire Brady

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: claire.brady@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc:

James Hughes and Nairita Chakraborty, Haringey Council

Hannah Parham, Donald Insall Associates

Regine Kandan and Katy Ghahremani, Make Architects

HORNSEY TOWN HALL , LONDON , N8 9JJ

Pre-application Advice

Presentation document received 6/6/17

Drawings sent by email on 3/7/17

Information Provided

Freetext



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