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Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
Planning. Design. Economics.

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Date 6 February 2013
Our ref 40671/14/MW/jsi/3641846v1
Your ref

Dear Miss Greaves

Council Chamber, Manchester Town Hall Extension – Application for Listed Building Consent for Installation of AV Equipment / Delegate System.

On behalf of our client, Manchester City Council (Town Hall Complex Transformation Programme), we are pleased to submit an application for Listed Building Consent for the following:

"Installation of AV Equipment/Delegate System and associated adaption of existing fabric and furniture".

The application was submitted via the Planning Portal on 6 February 2013 [Planning Portal ref. PP-02431636] and comprises the following:

- Completed application form for Listed Building Consent;
- Application cover letter/supporting statement;
- Drawings :
  1253-ISA-DR-F100-P-RL-03CC – Location Plan
  1253-ISA-DR-G320-XP-03CC – Existing Joinery and Cut-outs, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G331-XP-03CC – Existing Raised Floor, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G331-P-03CC – Proposed Raised Floor, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G320-P-03CC – Proposed Joinery and Cut-outs, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G320-D-03CC-001 – Adaption of Furniture for Delegate Panels, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G530-P-03CC – Proposed AV Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G530-S-03CC – Proposed AV Sections, Council Chamber.
  1253-ISA-DR-G530-D-03CC-001_P2 -Wall Mounted Pull Down Screen
  1253-ISA-DR-G530-D-03CC-002_P2 -Service Pole
- Heritage, Design and Access Statement, prepared by Heritage Project Management;

No fee is payable in respect of this application for Listed Building Consent.

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Site Location and Context

The Council Chamber is situated within the Grade II* listed Town Hall Extension, adjacent to the Grade I listed Town Hall, within the Albert Square Conservation Area. The wider area is known as the Manchester Town Hall Complex and also includes the Grade II* listed Central Library, Grade II* listed Cenotaph and Grade II listed Memorial Cross.

The proposed works are required to support the ongoing Transformation Project, in particular of the Grade II* listed Town Hall Extension building. This application is for the installation of AV equipment / delegate system and associated adaption of existing fabric and furniture.

Requirement for the Installation of AV Equipment/Delegate System

The old AV system removed during the asbestos removal works is no longer fit for use. A new AV system is required to equip the room with the necessary technology to enable its continuing use as a Council Chamber.

A review of AV requirements was carried out by MCC of the users of the Council Chamber. This series of AV Requirements noted the following key elements to be included within the AV installation, to bring the technology up to date:

- Members Voting / Conference System
- Cameras
- Media presentation display and audio system
- Localised recharging facilities for members / delegates.

Given the extensive works which are currently being carried out within the chamber it is the ideal opportunity to upgrade both the Voting system and the AV requirements to take advantage of clear floor voids and ensure that the installation is future proofed for the foreseeable future.

The new delegate systems will allow continued functionality of the chamber for MCC council business. In addition, the new projection system will allow greater visual and audible access to media presentations within the space and the provision of new hearing loop facilities will allow greater access to audible impaired groups. The increased power and WiFi provision within the space will also allow additional user groups to utilise the space for functions, presentations and events.

Overall, the proposals are seen to offer improved access and use of the Council Chamber.

Proposals

The proposal comprises:

- Installation of Media presentation display and audio system, including 2 no. AV screens, to be located at the front of the council chamber. AV screens would be in the form of a wall-mounted pull-down screen, which can retract when not in use.

- Installation of a new Members Voting / Conference System, which would consist of desk-top panels, to be fitted within the refurbished Council Chamber furniture
- Installation of localised recharging facilities for members / delegates
- 2 no. Free-standing speaker and CCTV units

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan for the site comprises the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 [NWRSS] (2008), the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document [MCS] and the 'saved' policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan [UDP] (1995).

The overriding criteria in relation to the historic environment is that proposals should preserve or enhance the character and setting of buildings and spaces which contribute to the City's heritage assets. Proposals that complement and take advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods including those of the City Centre will also be encouraged [NWRSS Policy DP7, MCS Policies EN3 and CC9].

Planning Considerations

As stated above, the proposal is required in order to equip the room with the necessary technology for its continuing use as a Council Chamber. The accompanying Heritage Statement concludes that the proposal will result in only 'minor adverse impacts that will be mitigated by the benefits gained by the users of the Council Chamber and visitors to the Town Hall Extension.'

The proposed works will not have an effect on to the localised character and appearance of the Council Chamber and will positively contribute to the usability and accessibility of the space.

It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the relevant provisions of the Manchester Core Strategy (Policies CC9 and EN3) and the Framework.

We trust that you have sufficient information to validate, consider and determine the application. Should you have any queries or wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Jenna Simpson on 0161 831 6130.

Yours sincerely,



Nathan Matta
Associate Director