



25/04384/FUL – The Guildhall and Large Hall, Market Hill, Cambridge

Application details

Report to: Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: Market

Proposal: Installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall

Applicant: Cambridge City Council

Presenting officer: Charlotte Spencer

Reason presented to committee: Land within the ownership of the Council

Member site visit date: 23 March 2026

Key issues: 1. Principle of Development

2. Impact on Character and Appearance and Heritage Assets

3. Sustainability

4. Highway Safety and Parking

5. Residential Amenity

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The application forms part of the wider Civic Quarter project which aims to reconnect the Guildhall, Market Square, Corn Exchange and surrounding public realm. The project aims to create an inclusive, attractive destination that enhances the civic heart of Cambridge. The applicants have engaged with the Local Planning Authority through numerous pre-applications under Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) starting in 2024 and leading up to the formal submission of the application.
- 1.2 The application aims to reinstate the Guildhall as the main civic and office space for Cambridge City Council whilst also future proofing the building in light of the Local Government Reform and proposed Unitary Authorities.

The proposals aim to make the Guildhall an exemplar of sustainability with a Net Zero aspiration; to provide sufficient modern office desk space; to ensure the core civic functions can be met; and aim to provide a range of commercial income generating uses.

- 1.3 The application seeks planning permission for installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall.
- 1.4 Additional information has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority during the course of the application. Amendments include: the removal of the ramp to the rear entrance, points of clarification added to the plans, alterations to the cycle access and End of Journey facilities and detailed responses to the consultees. Following the amendments, the scheme is broadly supported by consultee responses, however, there remains concern from Historic England in relation to the roof top plant and screening, particularly in regard to a lack of justification for the harm created by this element.
- 1.5 The proposal would not constitute a change of use and the redevelopment of the building is acceptable in principle.
- 1.6 The Guildhall comprises two Grade II Listed Buildings and it lies within the Historic Core Conservation Area, and within the setting of numerous listed buildings. It is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable level of impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, however, less than substantial harm to the heritage assets has been identified by reason of the proposed rooftop plant and screening. Notwithstanding, the Historic England objection, Officers consider that this harm has been sufficiently justified.
- 1.7 The proposal would result in public benefits. The development would follow EnerPhit principles and would aim to be a pilot project for UK Net Zero Carbon Standard which would result in a 65% reduction of energy use and an improvement to water efficiency aiming to reach 5Wat01 credits. The development would bring the building back into comprehensive use as Council offices and would result in improvements to the accessibility. It is considered that these benefits outweigh the identified harm.
- 1.8 It is considered that the development would have an acceptable impact on the local highway and would provide sufficient cycle parking spaces.

1.9 Due to the site's location in the city centre there are few neighbouring residential units. However, a Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the application and subject to conditions, the impact on residential amenity is considered to be acceptable.

1.10 Officers recommend that the Planning Committee **approve** the application subject to conditions as outlined at the end of this report.

Consultee	Object / No objection / No comment	Paragraph Reference
Conservation Officer	No Objection	6.1
County Council - Active Travel	No objection	6.7
County Highways Development Management	No objection	6.9
Ecology Officer	No objection	6.13
Environmental Health	No objection	6.14
Historic England	Objection	6.15
Landscape Officer	No objection	6.21
Sustainable Drainage Officer	No objection	6.22
Sustainability Officer	No objection	6.23
Urban Design Officer	No objection	6.25
Waste Officer	No objection	6.29
Design Review Panel	Comments	6.31
Third Party Representations	5 representations have been received, 1 in support, 3 in objection and 1 raising neutral comments	7.1
Member Representations (1)		8.1

Local Interest Groups and Organisations / Petition (2)		9.1
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Table 2 Consultee summary

2. Site description and context

- 2.1 The application relates to the Guildhall which is a Grade II Listed Building located to the south of Market Hill. It is surrounded on all sides by public highways of Market Hill, Guildhall Street, Wheeler Street and Peas Hill to the north, east, south and west respectively. The current Listing description is from 1996 and joined with the Guildhall is the separately and earlier Grade II Listed Victorian former Public Library and Town/Assembly Hall ('the Large Hall').
- 2.2 The Guildhall is particularly significant as the civic building of the city and is one of the smaller number of Town Halls from the 1930s by architect Charles Cowles Voysey. Presently, the Chamber and Committee Rooms remain in Council use, the ground floor offices are in use by Allia Future Business Centre and the Large and Small Halls are used for events. The upper floor offices have mostly been vacated, however, are used by a small number of Council Staff. There is an existing Tourist Information Centre which is accessed from Peas Hill.
- 2.3 The site lies within the City Centre, Primary Shopping Area and the Historic Core Conservation Area. It lies within the setting of numerous listed buildings including the Grade II* Church of St Edward and the Grade I Church of St Mary the Great and No.5 Market Hill. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) and is not at risk of surface water flooding.

3. The proposal

- 3.1 The application is seeking planning permission for the installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall
- 3.2 This application is for full planning permission and so only relates to the external alterations. There are numerous internal alterations proposed as part of the proposals, however, these would be considered in the listed

building application (25/04385/LBC). For clarification the works related to this application are as follows:

- Fourth floor extension on the western wing;
- Existing plant and telecoms equipment removed from roof and replaced with new rooftop plant and screening;
- Installation of solar PV panels on the large hall roof;
- Installation of roofs over each of the proposed atriums at third floor level;
- Small extension at basement level under Peas Hill for a substation;
- Insulation to sloped roofs and retiling;
- New rooflight to chamber

3.3 The application has been amended to address representations and further consultations have been carried out as appropriate. Amendments include, the removal of the ramp to the rear entrance, points of clarification added to the plans, alterations to the cycle access and End of Journey facilities and detailed responses to the consultees.

4. Relevant site history

Reference	Description	Outcome
25/04385/LBC	Installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall	Under determination
21/00483/FUL and 21/00484/LBC	Installation of 6 No. antennas on 3 No. on new offset brackets & support poles installed on new climbable tripod support, mounted on new steel grillage frames, Installation of ancillary equipment - 5 No. RRU's to be installed on 2 No. sloping pole brackets, fixed to brace poles at each antenna location, Installation of radio equipment within existing equipment cabin, Existing 6 No. antennas to be removed and replaced with 6 No. antennas fixed to wall and braced back to upper roof level Existing and new ancillary	Permitted

	equipment to be installed on 5No. new MAFI freestanding frames.	
18/0422/FUL and 18/0423/LBC	Installation of solar PV and edge protection on the roof of the Guildhall.	Permitted
08/1258/FUL	Change of use of 74 sqm to cafe (A3) and change of use of 32sqm to shop (A1)	Permitted

Table 2 Relevant site history

- 4.1 The have been multiple alterations to the building, the majority of which are not listed here. The existing cafe and Tourist Information Centre on the Peas Hill Side were approved in 2008. The solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall were approved in 2018 and the most recent applications for the telecommunication equipment were approved in 2021.

5. Policy

5.1 National policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design

Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)

EIA Directives and Regulations - European Union legislation with regard to environmental assessment and the UK's planning regime remains unchanged despite it leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Environment Act 2021

ODPM Circular 06/2005 – Protected Species

Equalities Act 2010

5.2 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024-2045 (Regulation 18 Stage Consultation - December 2025 to January 2026)

- 5.2.1 The Regulation 18 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (the draft 'Joint Local Plan' (JLP)) represents the next stage of preparing a new joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge. Once it is adopted, it will become the statutory development plan for the Greater Cambridge area, replacing the current (adopted) Local Plans for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District.
- 5.2.2 Following endorsement by Joint Cabinet in November, the draft JLP will proceed to a formal public consultation (under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). This is currently scheduled between 1 December 2025 and 30 January 2026.
- 5.2.3 In line with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to several factors. The draft JLP is consistent with policies in the current NPPF but represents an earlier stage of the plan making process. Therefore, at this stage, the draft JLP and its policies can only be afforded limited weight as a material consideration in decision making.

5.3 Cambridge Local Plan (2018)

- Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy 2: Spatial strategy for the location of employment development
- Policy 8: Setting of the city
- Policy 10: The City Centre
- Policy 11: Development in the City Centre Primary Shopping Area
- Policy 28: Carbon reduction, community energy networks, sustainable design and construction, and water use
- Policy 29: Renewable and low carbon energy generation
- Policy 31: Integrated water management and the water cycle
- Policy 32: Flood risk
- Policy 35: Protection of human health from noise and vibration
- Policy 36: Air quality, odour and dust
- Policy 40: Development and expansion of business space
- Policy 41: Protection of business space
- Policy 55: Responding to context
- Policy 56: Creating successful places
- Policy 58: Altering and extending existing buildings
- Policy 59: Designing landscape and the public realm
- Policy 60: Tall buildings and the skyline in Cambridge
- Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment
- Policy 63: Works to a heritage asset to address climate change

Policy 70: Protection of priority species and habitats
Policy 73: Community, sports and leisure facilities
Policy 80: Supporting sustainable access to development
Policy 81: Mitigating the transport impact of development
Policy 82: Parking management
Policy 84: Telecommunications

5.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020

5.5 Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

5.6 Other guidance

Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2001).

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2010)

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP): Waste

5.7 Area Guidelines

Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2015)

6. Consultations

Publicity

Neighbour letters – Y

Site Notice – Y

Press Notice – Y – Affects a Listed Building and Conservation Area

Conservation Officer- No Objection

6.1 Works for the atria would not be visible.

- 6.2 The louvred screen on the rooftop may affect the 'lightweight' appearance as seen within pre-application discussions, however, the current collection of antennae would be removed which is a benefit. Provided the height does not increase and the colour and materials are toned with the building, the impact on the listed building as seen within the conservation area would not be significantly adverse.
- 6.3 The form and scale of the fourth floor extension conforms to the established building form. The extension would be sympathetic and would not impact the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.4 Considered that the PV panels would maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.5 No objection subject to a condition relating to the roof top plant.
- 6.6 *Officer comment: Members are reminded that these comments are applicable to the full element of the scheme only and any internal changes to the historic fabric would be dealt with under the listed building application.*

Cambridgeshire County Council - Active Travel – Object

- 6.7 Difficult access to the cycle parking which appears to require negotiating steps and multiple doors
- 6.8 Officer comment: The latest amendments have sought to address these concerns which are covered in the officer assessment. Any further comment from Active Travel will be reported on the amendment sheet or orally.

County Highways Development Management – No Objection

- 6.9 The Highway Authority welcomes the removal of the ramp to the rear entrance. It maintains the position that any door should be recessed so that they do not open outwards over the public highway.
- 6.10 Notwithstanding this, the Highway Act does allow a Public Building Exception and for public buildings this rule can be bypassed if the City Council and Highway Authority provide specific consent for the doors to open outwards.

- 6.11 Requests that any detailed/hard landscaping/paving that fall outside of the application site be specifically excluded from any permission that the planning authority is minded to grant as these works are subject to a separate planning application to which the Highway Authority has raised an objection to.
- 6.12 Requests conditions relating to construction vehicles time restriction, and the submission of a traffic management plan.

Ecology Officer - No Objection

- 6.13 No objection subject to conditions relating to ecological enhancement, lighting, green roofs and compliance with the submitted reports.

Environmental Health - No Objection

- 6.14 No objection subject to conditions relating to construction hours and deliveries, amplified music restrictions, compliance with the noise impact assessment, details of the plant.

Historic England - Object

- 6.15 Welcome the amended plans with the identification of key rooms and the approach to the treatment of different areas. Welcome the retention of the original furniture in some key rooms such as Committee Rooms and the Szeged Room. Happy that our queries have been addressed.
- 6.16 Comfortable with the fourth floor extension and could represent an acceptable addition to the building.
- 6.17 However, the bulk of the plant and screening would detract from the building's architectural composition and proportions resulting in harm to its architectural interest as the most important civic building. Remain unconvinced that a robust justification for the plant layout as consider that if it were to be spread across a wider area it would likely result on a less visually disruptive alternative. However, it is noted that this would result in the loss of the extension.
- 6.18 Could not support the relocation of Council Chamber seating in the Small and Large Halls as it would detract from the architectural character on these rooms. However, no concerns with the relocation to the Police Court or 'Heart Space'.

- 6.19 In regards to the Strong Room there are concerns with the differential treatment proposed on this room, with a stark division across separating meeting rooms and spaces associated with the Wellness Space would strongly affect its legibility eroding the overall plan form. It is not clear why the nature of the split between Council staff and commercial area needs to be in this particular form.
- 6.20 In conclusion, broadly support the principles and ambitions behind the scheme and much of what is proposed. However, remain unconvinced and unable to support the proposed roof plant and strong room arrangement.

Landscape Officer - No Objection

- 6.21 No material considerations

Sustainable Drainage Officer - No Objection

- 6.22 Supported

Sustainability Officer - No Objection

- 6.23 The EnerPhit principles, the aim to be a pilot project for UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard and the proposed measures to improve sustainability are welcome. The scheme is targeting 5 Wat01 credits. No objection subject to conditions relating to the implementation of Sustainability and Energy Strategies, Water Calculator, Rainwater Harvesting and water metering.
- 6.24 The proposed amendments do not materially alter the sustainability aspirations of the proposals.

Urban Design Officer - No Objection

- 6.25 The proposed extension is considered acceptable. It has been clarified that the PV panels on the roof of the extension would not be visible above the 0.3 metre high parapet and so would not have visual impact from street level or local viewpoints. Amended information does clarify concern regarding safety barriers, a wire based safety restraint system would provide the most visually unobtrusive solution to working at height. Details of the PV panels, support frames and safety restraint system can be covered by way of condition.
- 6.26 Proposed screen to the plant is acceptable as it would read as a subordinate and recessive element that does not detract from the building's architectural presence.

- 6.27 The revisions made to the cycle parking access and reconfiguration of the changing rooms improve their overall usability and are acceptable.
- 6.28 Welcome the removal of the Council Chamber furniture from the first floor landing as it would allow to be used more flexibly.
- 6.29 Raised concerns that the office spaces are undersized, however understands that it will be for future occupiers to configure rooms to meet accommodation needs.

Waste Officer – No Objection

- 6.30 The refuse strategy is as existing and so is acceptable. The bins must be presented at the designated collection point on Parsons Court and this must be formally incorporated into the building's management strategy.

Design Review Panel Meeting of 26 June 2025 (Appendix A of application 25/04382/FUL for full comments)

- 6.31 The whole of the Civic Quarter redevelopment scheme went to the Design Review Panel (DRP) in June 2025. In regards to the Guildhall the DRP agreed that the inclusive vision is welcome. Everyone should be able to access the toilets at the Guildhall and this needs to be carefully thought through.
- 6.32 The sustainability specialist was pleased for the proposals for the Guildhall. However, queries were raised about visual and noise impact from the enclosed air source heat pumps.
- 6.33 The character specialist was generally supportive of the scheme. However, they queried whether the Guildhall entrance be opened up more as the space feels closed off and there were concerns about the design and extent of the plant screening.
- 6.34 The panel was concerned about the loss of the Council Chamber use including its furniture. The works to the chamber would seem to lose some of the building's civic value and its meaning as a focus of democracy.

7. Third party representations

- 7.1 5 representations have been received, 1 in support and 3 in objection and 1 raising neutral comments.

7.2 Those in objection have raised the following issues:

- Character, appearance and scale
 - Plant screen
 - Seems to ignore Policy 60 (Tall buildings)
 - Does not enhance the character of the city
- Heritage impacts
 - Raked seating is very important and redesigning chamber floor is unnecessary expense
- Construction impacts
 - Concern about the closure during the works and impact on city centre
- Accessibility
 - Guildhall is considered an impenetrable hard to access building and design does not alter this
- Loss of Tourist Information Centre
 - Removing it is contrary to Policy 8 (Services and Local Facilities) as it is contrary to the intent to safeguard and enhance a broad range of services
 - Contrary to Policy 7 (River Cam) as allows for accurate information and wayfinding for river related visitor attractions
- Poor public consultation

7.3 Those in support have given the following reasons:

- Support redevelopment of the Guildhall

7.4 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

8. Member Representations

8.1 None received.

9. Local Groups / Petition

9.1 Cambridge Past, Present and Future (CPPF) has made a representation objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Support the revitalisation of the Civic Quarter but have concerns over some of the design and functional elements of the Guildhall;
- Lack of room by room assessments nor reference to the 2003 Conservation Plan;
- Concern regarding the visual impact of the plant screen as it will be seen in shadow views from the Market Square;

- Screen is a heavy discordant volume that disrupts the buildings original silhouette and balanced geometry;
- Concern that the application fails to revitalise the buildings historic civic role notably by not realising the full potential of the Large and Small Halls and omission of welcoming accessible entrance;
- Loss of tourist centre from the Guildhall;
- Heart space layout appears formal and inflexible;

9.2 The Tourist Information Centre has made a representation objecting to the application, in addition to providing separate third party comments, which are summarised below:

- Contrary to the loss of ground floor premises into offices;
- Loss of Orelene's Café;
- When the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) closed in 2020 it was apparent that the city was not providing the best possible visitor engagement and resulting in unmanaged overspill of tourists asking questions in shops;
- Reopened in 2023 and has become a valuable asset;
- Data shows 172 people per day use the TIC

9.3 As part of the objection document, the TIC have provided a petition with 89 separate responses listed. The petition objects to the loss of the Tourist Information Centre.

9.4 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

10. Assessment

10.1 From the consultation responses and representations received and from an inspection of the site and the surroundings, the key issues are:

- Principle of development
- Design, layout, scale and impact on heritage assets
- Heritage assets
- Carbon reduction and sustainable design
- Biodiversity
- Water management and flood risk
- Highway safety and transport impacts
- Car and cycle parking
- Amenity
- Third party representations
- Other matters

- Planning balance
- Recommendation
- Planning conditions

11. Principle of Development

- 11.1 The existing building comprises Council office space, Council rooms, commercial office space (Allia Future Business Centre), event space in the form of the Large and Small Halls, a Tourist Information and café. As of September 2020 all of these elements fall under Use Class E (Commercial Business or Service)
- 11.2 The uses following development would largely remain as existing with exception to the loss of the café and Tourist Information Centre and introduction of a 'wellness space' within the basement. This space has been explained within the Planning Statement as 'currently undefined and will be subject to agreement with future occupiers, but could include a gym or spa for use of the commercial tenants. It is not assumed to be open to the public and would be considered ancillary to the offices.' On this basis, the applicants are seeking that this area be considered as Use Class E. However, the applicants are advised that as soon as it is determined how the space will be used they should speak to the Local Planning Authority to consider whether a change of use application should be sought. They are also advised to ensure that they make clear to any future tenants.
- 11.3 Subsequently, following development the building would remain as Class E and the application does not seek consent for any material change of use
- 11.4 Third party objections have been received in relation to the loss of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and these are noted. The objections refer to policies 7, 8 and 11. Policy 7 refers only to development proposals along the River Cam corridor, which this site does not lie within. In regards to Policy 8, it is believed that the third party incorrectly refers to Policy 8 which is 'Setting of the city' and instead should have referred to Section 8 which includes a number of policies on 'Services and Local Facilities'. Officers cannot find any relevant policy within Section 8 that would need to be addressed.
- 11.5 As explained above, the proposal would not represent a material change of use in planning terms and so Policy 11 is not triggered. It is also noted that since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, the Planning Use Classes have changed and many of the acceptable city centre uses now fall under the same use class. Both the existing TIC and the proposed office meeting

room to replace the TIC fall under Class E and so planning permission is not required for this use change. Regardless of the outcome of this application, the tenants of the unit can be altered within Use Class E without permission from with the Local Planning Authority.

- 11.6 Subsequently, whilst the concerns regarding the loss of the TIC are noted, its loss is considered to be a commercial decision rather than a material planning consideration. As such, it is not for the Local Planning Authority to arbitrate.
- 11.7 The principle of uses is not under consideration as part of the proposed scheme. The main issues are whether the physical works to the building which require express planning permission are acceptable. These works are the subject of the officer assessment for planning permission below.

12. Design, layout, scale and impact on heritage assets

- 12.1 The proposal is seeking planning permission for the installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall.
- 12.2 Policies 55, 56, 58 and 59 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) seek to ensure that development responds appropriately to its context, is of a high quality, reflects or successfully contrasts with existing building forms and materials.
- 12.3 The site comprises two Grade II listed buildings the Guildhall and the Victorian former Public Library and Town/Assembly Hall and it lies within the Historic Core Conservation Area.
- 12.4 Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 12.5 Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 12.6 Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that '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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Para.215 states 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

12.7 Policy 61 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

12.8 The application is for full planning permission and so only relates to the external alterations. There are numerous internal alterations proposed as part of the proposed scheme, however, these will be considered in more detail within the consideration of the listed building application. For clarification the works related to this application are as follows:

- Fourth floor extension on the western wing;
- Existing plant and telecoms equipment removed from roof and replaced with new plant and plant screen;
- Installation of solar PV panels on the large hall roof;
- Installation of roofs over each of the proposed atriums at third floor level
- Small extension at basement level under Peas Hill for a substation;

Fourth Floor Extension

12.9 A fourth floor extension is proposed to the rear of the western wing of the Guildhall. It would span for a maximum depth of 30 metres and would have a width of 7.6 metres. It would be set in from the west and northern existing elevations by 1.4 metres. It would have a height of 4.2 metres which would measure 21 metres above ground level. The form of the extension would follow the existing built form of this wing including a curved wall in the south western corner. It would clad in bronzed aluminium cladding.

12.10 It is considered that the extension is well judged in scale and massing with the set back allowing it to sit comfortably within the established roofline and wider townscape. The use of materials would provide a high-quality contemporary material that works well with the tones of the materials on the existing building reading as a well-proportioned and refined addition. The

DRP considered this element to a logical and positive step. The roof would be biodiverse and so would be compliant with Policy 31 of the Local Plan.

- 12.11 Solar panels would be installed on the roof of the extension. It is understood that the panels would not be visible above the 0.3 metre high parapet and so these would not have a visual impact from street level of local viewpoints. A condition can be added to secure the final details of these panels to ensure they would not be visible.
- 12.12 In terms of impact on the heritage assets, the extension is located in a part of the building that was originally intended to be built out, however, this was never constructed, with exception to the stairway up to it. In addition, it is noted it would replace an existing array of service equipment. Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer consider that the extension would be sympathetic to the listed building and would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Roof Plant and Screen

- 12.13 The rooftop plant would be located on the front part of the existing main roof replacing the existing solar panels and telecoms equipment. The screening would run along the edge of the building facing Market Hill, Peas Hill and Guildhall Street and partially along south facing area of the plant. It would be set back from the inside edge of the parapet by 0.7 metres. The screen would have a maximum height of 2.4 metres projecting 2 metres above the existing parapet. It would result in a maximum height of 23.2 metres above ground level. The screen would be an anodised aluminium and louvred.
- 12.14 The proposed plant would replace existing antenna and associated telecoms equipment. The existing equipment is considered to have a detrimental impact on the building and the heritage assets. As such, it is considered that the removal of the existing equipment would have a positive impact.
- 12.15 It is considered that the proposed screen would read as a subordinate and recessive element. The use of bronze coloured cladding would match that of the extension and is considered to be sympathetic to the existing building. Whilst the solid board located behind the louvre may affect the screen's light weight appearance, the profiles and other detailing would allow the screen to blend into the roofscape rather than appear dominant and bulky.

- 12.16 In terms of heritage impact, both Historic England and the DRP raised concerns with this element regarding the impact on the appreciation of the building, particularly facing Market Square affecting the building's proportions and detracting from key views concluding that it would introduce considerable levels of harm to the listed building and conservation area. This advice is contrary to the Council's Conservation Officer, who has considered that there would be some impact particularly with the level of 'light weightiness' to the screening, however, they considered that the removal of the existing array of antenna would balance out the impact of the new screen. The net impact on the heritage assets is considered below.
- 12.17 Discussions have been held with the applicant's design team and officers of the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of the proposal and officers consider that the final proposed scheme successfully balances the requirements of the screening, including noise insulation and ventilation and its visual impact. It is considered that it has been well designed to follow the appearance and form of the existing building. Notwithstanding this, officers accept there will be a harmful impact, particularly to the front elevation, which is afforded longer views from across Market Square. The harm would be of a medium level of 'less than substantial harm' to the Listed Building and setting of the Conservation Area. The harm could be partly mitigated by the final design of the louvre which can be secured by way of condition.
- 12.18 A third-party objector has raised an issue that the proposed plant screen does not comply with Policy 60 of the local plan. Policy 60 relates to tall buildings and states that any proposal for a structure that breaks the existing skyline and/or is significantly taller than the surrounding building form will be considered against a number of criteria. Appendix F goes on to define the skyline of the historic core and any proposals of six or more storeys (excluding roof top plant) and a height of 19 metres above ground level would automatically trigger the need to address the criteria, however dependent on the exact location within the historic core, buildings of four to six storeys may need to be evaluated. Whilst the total height of the Guildhall following development would be over 19 metres, the building is only 5 storeys in height and whilst this would be increased, the additional height above the parapet would be limited to 2 metres, and it would be only marginally taller than the existing roof line of the large hall. In addition, the Guildhall is surrounded by tall buildings ranging from 4 to 5 storeys and as such, Officers do not consider that the Guildhall would be significantly taller than the existing built form and Policy 60 is not engaged.

Solar Panels to Large Hall Roof

- 12.19 The scheme proposes solar panels to the roof of the large hall. These would be located on the eastern, northern and western roof slopes, however, none would be located on the curved section to the south. The panels would be fixed to a raised mounting frame which would sit slightly above the roof slopes.
- 12.20 The northern and eastern facing panels would not be visible from the public realm immediately around the site, however, the western facing panels would be visible from longer views along Bene't Street. This western slope would not be seen against other key buildings and solar panels are becoming more common in the city centre including on listed buildings. As such, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be maintained.
- 12.21 In terms of the significance of the listed building, the placing of PV panels on the prominent curved roof slope to the south would be avoided and this is welcomed. The use of a mounting frame would minimise the unnecessary loss of historic roof slates and allows for the work to have a level of 'reversibility'. Subsequently, it is considered that the proposal would have a neutral impact on the significance of the building.

Other external elements

- 12.22 The other elements such as the roofing to the atria and small basement extension would not be visible from the public realm. It is considered that these are minor alterations with limited impact. As such, it is considered that they would not have an adverse impact on the existing building and surrounding area and would not have an adverse impact on the significance of the heritage assets.
- 12.23 The roofs of the small and large halls, the chamber and the Police/Sessions court would be insulated. This would involve the lifting of the existing tiles and the relaying of the tiles once insulated. It is considered that this would have a limited visual impact. New roof lights would be added to the chamber and courts in the same position as the existing. It is considered that these are minor alterations with limited impact.
- 12.24 The DRP and a third-party objector raised that spaces within the Guildhall feel closed off and impenetrable, suggesting that Guildhall entrance could be opened up more to Market Square to improve permeability between the spaces. These comments are noted, however, officers have to review the scheme that has been put forward within an application. Notwithstanding this, the building is highly constrained and is a listed building so any

additional openings to the front façade of the building could have a detrimental impact on the heritage asset.

Summary

12.25 Overall, the proposed development is a high-quality design that would contribute positively to its surroundings. The proposal is compliant with policies of the Local Plan policies 55,56,58 and 59 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

12.26 In terms of the impact on the heritage assets, the below table summarises the impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area.

Proposal	Impact on Conservation Area	Impact on Listed Building
Fourth Floor Extension	Neutral	Neutral
Plant and Screen	Medium level of 'less than substantial harm'	Medium level of 'less than substantial harm'
Removal of telecoms	Positive	Positive
PV Panels	Neutral	Neutral
Atria roofs	Neutral	Neutral
Basement extension	Neutral	Neutral
Re-roofing of small/large halls	Neutral	Neutral
<i>Net Heritage impact</i>	<i>Low – medium level of less than substantial harm</i>	<i>Low – medium level of less than substantial harm</i>

Table 3 Summary of heritage impact

12.27 Subsequently, the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to both the Conservation Area and Listed Building. The identified harm is created by the proposed plant and screening on the roof. This has been

adequately justified, primarily on the basis that, as a result of the works, the sustainability of the building would be significantly improved.

- 12.28 As per paragraph 213 of the NPPF, any harm to a designated heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification.
- 12.29 In regard to the roof plant and screening, Historic England have stated that the bulk and layout of the plant has not been sufficiently justified as they consider that the plant could be spread over a large area reducing the harm. The plant is required to reduce the energy use of the building. It has been laid out over the existing flat roof space and under the current proposals there is no further adequate roof space available and in order to spread the plant out further the extension would need to be removed. The extension is proposed to increase the lettable area of the Guildhall and as explained above, would complete the believed, unbuilt element of the original building. The applicant has stated within the planning statement that the extension would bring in an estimated £103,100 in rent per annum as per table 3 within the Planning Statement. If this was not included it would result in the reduction of a potential surplus revenue by 20% which in turn would have a negative impact on the cashflow to support the front line services and make improvements to the existing building. If the plant was to be spread to a wider roof area, this would not negate the need for screening and may result in additional screening on areas of the roof where there is currently non proposed. As such, officers consider that the plant and screening has been adequately justified.
- 12.30 As less than substantial harm has been identified, paragraph 215 of the NPPF is therefore engaged and the harm needs to be considered against the public benefits of the scheme.
- 12.31 The scheme would result in a 65% reduction in energy use reducing its carbon footprint, more details of this are explained in the section below. This is considered to be a significant environmental public benefit. The works would also improve accessibility to the building and would create more public spaces internally. The fourth floor extension would bring in an additional revenue stream for the Council, however, this is a private benefit and so would carry no weight in this instance.
- 12.32 Officers consider that these benefits outweigh the identified heritage harm.
- 12.33 The site lies within the setting of numerous listed buildings including the Grade II* Church of St Edward, King and Martyr located on Peas Hill opposite the Guildhall. It is considered that the proposals would not have an undue impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

12.34 The proposal is compliant with Policy 61 of the Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

13. Carbon reduction and sustainable design

13.1 The application is supported by a Sustainability Statement, Energy and Carbon Reductions Statement and a Sustainability Section within the Design and Access Statement.

13.2 From the outset of the pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, the applicants had been working with the EnerPHit principles, however Officers identified the potential for the scheme to be pilot project for UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard Pilot Programme (UKNZCBS) which has since been adopted by the applicant's project team and carried through to application stage.

13.3 In order to achieve the requirements of UKNZCBS and EnerPHit the following approach has been integrated into the design:

- Targets being sought:
 - Embodied carbon - Upfront carbon of 549.4 KgCO₂e/m² GIA baseline target with an aspirational target of 458 KgCO₂e/m² GIA;
 - Operational Energy – 96.8 kWh/m² GIA/year with an aspirational target of 87.5 kWh/m² GIA/year;
 - Achievement of 5 BREEAM Wat01 credits for water efficiency.
- At the time of submission modelling shows that the project is on target for:
 - 65% less energy consumed than the existing building;
 - Primary Energy Renewable is 139 kWh/m² of TFA which is within the EnerPHit limit of 147;
 - Predicted heating demand of 67.6 kWh/m² of TFA

13.4 These energy targets are achieved by integrating a range of measures including:

- Extensive fabric upgrades;
- Provision of Mechanical Extraction Plant (MEP);
- Existing secondary glazing to be upgraded to new triple glazed; secondary glazing with more slender options being explored for the more historic rooms;

- Installation of solar PV panels which are calculated to generate 78,7000kWh/year

- 13.5 In regards to overheating the scheme proposes the following:
- Stack effect ventilation through the provision of motorise openings at the top of atria;
 - Opening up the layout to increase cross ventilation where possible;
 - Night time purge ventilation.
- 13.6 The project aims to achieve 5 Wat01 credits which represents a 55% reduction in water use using the current BREEAM methodology. This will be achieved by:
- Using water efficient fixtures and fittings
 - Rainwater harvesting to provide toilet flushing.
- 13.7 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Sustainability Officer. They have advised that the approach of using EnerPhit principles and the aim to be a pilot project for UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard (UKNZCBS) would help test and refine the retrofit requirements and welcome the water efficiency targets. They are in agreement with the current modelling.
- 13.8 Due to the buildings constraints there would be some shortfalls. For example the Solar panels would generate 78,7000kWh/year, which falls slightly short of the required 85,050kWh/year for UKNZCBS, however, there may be an allowance due to the constraints of the building. In addition, some comfort cooling would be required for example in the basement rooms or heritage spaces where natural ventilation would be limited. Regardless of the constraints the sustainability measures and targets are ambitious and would result in a significant reduction in energy and water consumption.
- 13.9 The applicant is committed to connect into the City Heat Network when this project comes forward. Whilst benefiting from the Heat Network the Guildhall would also be able to contribute to it.
- 13.10 The measures in regard to sustainability are exemplary and would greatly reduce the carbon footprint of a civically important building. There is no policy obligation for the applicant to achieve these standards and the applicants have gone above and beyond in terms of sustainability and renewable energy. Subject to conditions regarding the implementation of these strategies and details regarding water calculations, rainwater

harvesting and water metering which are considered to ensure the redevelopment reaches the high standards, the proposal is compliant with policies 28 and 29 of the Local Plan and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020.

14. Biodiversity

- 14.1 The application is supported by a statutory BNG metric, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), Bat Emergence Survey (BES) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Plan.
- 14.2 The site consists of buildings and sealed surfaces. The PEA has recommended non-licensable reasonable avoidance measures to remove any risk of residual harm or disturbance to protected or priority species and the Ecology Officer agrees with the analysis.
- 14.3 Following the PEA recommendations, a PRA was conducted and the Guildhall was assessed as having low and moderate roost suitability which required emergence surveys to be done. The BES found no evidence of bats using the building. However, precautionary and mitigation measures can be secured by way of condition.
- 14.4 A mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain as per the Environment Act is not required as the amount of habitat impact would be de-minimis as so the application is exempt. Notwithstanding that the application is exempt from BNG, a metric has been submitted for the whole Civic Quarter redevelopment resulting in an increase 0.3 habitat units, mainly in the form of planting within the Market Square application (25/04382/FUL).
- 14.5 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Ecology Officer, who raises no objection to the proposal and recommends several conditions to ensure the protection of species is delivered. The conditions regarding compliance with the reports and ecological enhancement are considered reasonable and required to ensure the protection and enhancement of ecological species. A green roof is being proposed over the fourth floor extension and so details of this are required to ensure it would be suitable. In terms of a ecological lighting report officers consider that this would be unreasonable as the site is located in an urban area which lights are prevalent. Officers are satisfied that the proposed development complies with policy 70 of the Local Plan, the Biodiversity SPD 2022, the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and 06/2005 Circular advice.

15. Water management and flood risk

- 15.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered at low risk of flooding. It is not at risk of surface water flooding.
- 15.2 The Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineer has advised that the surface water and foul water would connect to the existing drainage systems and has no objections to the scheme. The proposal is in accordance with policies 31 and 32 of the Local Plan and NPPF advice.

16. Highway safety and transport impacts

- 16.1 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which covers all elements of the Civic Quarter redevelopment.
- 16.2 The Guildhall was last used regularly by all staff in early 2020 at which point a maximum of about 300 staff worked there. Currently circa 40-50 people work in the Guildhall on a daily basis which can vary dependent on needs. The Transport Statement explains that the maximum capacity of the Guildhall following redevelopment would be 370 which would be 70 more than the previous capacity.
- 16.3 There are no staff car parking spaces and whilst there are some public car parks nearby these are unlikely to be used by staff working at the office due to the costs. As such, the vast majority of users will arrive at the Guildhall on foot or cycle, whether for the whole or partial journey. Subsequently, it is considered that the increase of 70 staff members would not impact on the wider transport network.
- 16.4 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Highways Authority. They have raised concerns with external doors opening onto the public highway. The doors that open outwards are as existing and not being proposed to be changed under this application. In addition, the Local Highways Authority has confirmed that the Highway Act does allow for a Public Building Exception and this rule can be bypassed if Cambridge City Council and the Highway Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) provide specific consent. This is done outside of the planning process and an informative can be added to remind the applicant of the requirement to gain consent should it be necessary.
- 16.5 The Highways Authority have requested conditions relating to the submission of a Traffic Management Plan and restrictions to construction

vehicles. These are considered reasonable. It is noted that they also request any works outside of the site, such as the works to Guildhall Street, Corn Exchange Street and Wheeler Street be specifically excluded from any permission. The proposed plans do not show works outside of the red line.

- 16.6 Subject to conditions the proposal accords with the objectives of Policies 80 and 81 of the Local Plan and is compliant with the NPPF advice.

17. Car and cycle provision

- 17.1 Policy 82 states that planning permission will not be granted for developments that would be contrary to the parking standards as set out in Appendix L. For offices inside a controlled parking zone Appendix L states that should be a maximum of 1 car parking space per 100sqm plus disabled parking and 2 cycle spaces for every 5 members of staff or 1 per 30 sqm Gross Floor Area (whichever is greater) with some visitor parking on merit.

Cycle parking

- 17.2 The development would provide 166 cycle spaces the majority of which would be located within the basement. Within the basement there would be 102 cycle spaces in the form of double stacking cycle racks and 59 Sheffield stands. Five cycle parking spaces on the ground floor would be provided for non-standard cycles. Paragraph L.19 states that two-tier/double stacked racks will be considered for non-residential developments, however, a minimum of 20% should be Sheffield stands.
- 17.3 The Transport Statement states that maximum capacity of the Guildhall following development would be 370 people which would require 148 spaces and so the proposal exceeds the minimum requirement in compliance with Policy 82. 38% of the proposed cycle spaces would be Sheffield stands.
- 17.4 Those reaching the Guildhall by cycle would enter at the rear entrance close to the Wheeler Street/ Guildhall Street junction. A wheel ramp would be added to existing small steps to allow those who are able to reach the lift lobby where there is a cycle lift and stairs with a wheel ramp. The cycle lift has been designed so that the cycles can be enter and exit the lift in forward motion. There is a second route for those that are able with a new set of steps with wheel ramp within the service corridor. For those unable to manoeuvre the cycle on the steps and for those with non standard cycles, a ramp with a gradient of 1:13 would replace the existing 1:5 gradient ramp which would lead to the 5 larger spaces within the service corridor. Where

there are doors separating corridors, these would have buttons for automatic door openings.

- 17.5 A cycle repair station and pump would be provided within the entrance lobby. End of Journey facilities such as showers would be provided on the ground floor immediately adjacent to the cycle lift/lobby.
- 17.6 The comments from the County Council's Active Travel Team are noted. Whilst Officers accept that the access to the proposed cycle parking is not ideal, the constraints of the listed building need to be considered. The proposed cycle parking provision would be an improvement on the existing arrangement as the access ramp would be shallower in gradient and additional cycle parking would be provided.
- 17.7 In terms of visitor cycle parking there are many cycle spaces in the public realm around the Guildhall and there is a large cycle park within the Grand Arcade Car Park which is approximately 150m from the Guildhall.
- 17.8 Subsequently, the development would provide a quantum of cycle spaces which exceeds the minimum requirement and would include spaces for non-standard cycles. The proposed cycle parking, in number, accessibility and arrangement is compliant with policy 81 of the Local Plan.

Car parking

- 17.9 The Guildhall is and would be car free. Whilst Appendix L does provide information on recommended car parking spaces this is a maximum figure and there is not a policy requirement to meet these.
- 17.10 The Guildhall is located within the city centre and so it is in a sustainable location with access to good public transport links. The nearest public car park is the Grand Arcade which is approximately 150 metres from the Guildhall. There are 5 existing on street Blue Badge spaces on Peas Hill and Guildhall Street with a further 35 within the Grand Arcade Car Park.
- 17.11 Subsequently, there are no objections to the Guildhall remaining a car free building and it is compliant with policy 81 of the Local Plan.

18. Amenity

- 18.1 The nearest residential properties are located above Cath Kidson/ Hugo Boss/ Anthropologie at the corner of Market Hill, Peas Hill and St Marys Passage. The units are either residential units or student accommodation.

The majority of the neighbouring buildings are commercial. Given the adjacent context, location, size, and design of the proposal it is unlikely to give rise to any significant amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of daylight, or enclosure.

- 18.2 In terms of noise sensitive receptors in addition to the residential units the Premier Inn on Guildhall Street and the Cambridge University Catholic Chaplaincy at Fisher House on Guildhall Street also need to be considered.
- 18.3 A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer. The proposed use of the building is similar to the existing. However, the new plant on the rooftop has the potential to cause additional noise nuisance.
- 18.4 The Noise Impact Assessment primarily addresses the impact on the new plant. The plant/ equipment noise emission has been designed to be equal to or below the existing background noise levels at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors. Mitigation to achieve this includes a combination of in-duct attenuation to the Air Handling Units and a solid noise barrier to screen the air source heat pumps. The plant screen would extend 2.4 metres above the roof level and is recommended to be solid.
- 18.5 The Environmental Health Officer is in agreement with the Noise Impact Assessment's conclusion that the operational noise impact due to mechanical plant/ equipment operating at the site is likely to result in a 'No observed adverse effect level' or at worst a very low adverse impact. The final details of the plant and screening would need to be conditioned to ensure that this is achieved.
- 18.6 Other conditions relating to construction hours and deliveries, and amplified music/voice within the Small and Large Halls are recommended to limit noise disturbance to the noise sensitive receptors and neighbouring residential properties. The halls currently do not have any restrictions, so it would be unreasonable to secure this. In regards to construction hours and deliveries, access to the city centre is already restricted and so Officers consider that using a Construction Environmental Management Plan would be better suited.
- 18.7 Subsequently, subject to conditions, the proposal adequately respects the amenity of its neighbours. Subject to conditions, the proposal is compliant with policies 35 and 58 of the Local plan.

Future users

20.9 The Urban Design Officer raised concerns about the size of some of the proposed office spaces in that they appear to be undersized in relation to the intended level of occupancy. This issue is not a material planning consideration. The applicant has pointed out that there is a range of work settings including touch down and meeting spaces and informal working areas. The final layout of the workspaces is for the future occupiers to configure to meet their accommodation needs and not for the Local Planning Authority to consider as part of this application.

It is known that there is asbestos within the building. Exposure to asbestos in buildings is regulated outside of development control by the Health and Safety Executive. An informative shall be added to remind the applicant of the legislation.

19. Third party representations

19.1 The remaining third-party representations not addressed in the preceding paragraphs are summarised and responded to in the table below:

Third party comment	Officer response
Closure during the works	<p>Concerns have been raised regarding the closure of the building during the construction works and subsequent disruption.</p> <p>As this is a temporary impact this is not a planning matter. However, the majority of the Guildhall is currently vacant with Council staff working mostly at Mandela House. Whilst the Guildhall is still used for Council committees/meetings, this is for the City Council to consider and not the LPA.</p>
Poor Consultation	<p>Concerns have been raised in regards to poor public consultation. This is in regard to pre-application consultation by the applicant rather than the statutory consultation carried out by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Section 3.3 of the Design and Access Statement outlines the public engagement that the applicant completed.</p> <p>Whilst robust public engagement is encouraged within the planning process, it is not a reason to refuse a planning application.</p>

Table 4 Officer response to third party representations

20. Other matters

Accessibility

- 20.1 The existing building has many accessibility constraints and there are limited step free routes through the building. There are level accesses from Peas Hill and these are to remain. However, these entrances are often seen as the 'side' entrances. At the front there is a small external step up to the entrance and internally there are 3 steps from the doorway to the lobby.
- 20.2 The scheme indicates a level table to the entrance would be created externally and that this would be delivered through the application to redevelop the Market Square and public realm (reference 25/04382/FUL).
- 20.3 Internally, a platform lift is proposed and it is designed to be concealed within the stairway when not in use. A similar lift is proposed at the Guildhall Street entrance. Platform lifts are also proposed to serve the dais within the Council Chamber and the stage within the large hall.
- 20.4 The existing lifts which are not Part M compliant would be replaced with full accessible lifts in the same location.
- 20.5 Accessible toilets, showers, changing places and a breastfeeding room would be provided.
- 20.6 It is considered that whilst there are still obstacles to being fully accessible, Officers note the constraints of the building and the need to protect the historic fabric against the need to improve accessibility. The proposed improvements are suitable for a building for this type and does make an improvement from the current situation.

Bins

- 20.7 The bin store would be relocated internally to provide an increased space for the storage of bins. Sufficient bins would be provided for the Guildhall and the two commercial buildings (Giggling Squid and Sticks N Sushi). The management of the waste is to remain similar to the existing situation.

21. Planning Balance

- 21.1 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Summary of harm

- 21.2 The proposed rooftop plant and screen would read as a subordinate and recessive element that would match the design of the proposed extension. Notwithstanding this it is considered that it would affect the building's proportions and detract from key views particularly from Market Square. However, the final scheme balances the requirements of the screening to the large amount of plant required to meet the high sustainability targets and its visual impact. The removal of the existing telecommunications antennae would also mitigate the harm to some degree as this is seen as a positive outcome
- 21.3 Notwithstanding the above, the net impact would subsequently be a low-medium level 'less than substantial harm' to the Listed Building and Conservation Area. Officers consider that the harm has been sufficiently justified by reason of the need for the amount of plant and the sustainability improvements facilitated by it.

Summary of benefits

- 21.4 The scheme by reason of the addition of the plant, solar panels and extensive fabric upgrades would result in a 65% reduction in energy use coupled with 5 Wat01 credits which represents a 55% reduction in water use. If achieved this would be an exemplar in sustainability with a Net Zero aspiration and this would be of significant environmental public benefit. The works would also improve accessibility to the building and would create more public spaces internally.
- 21.5 Additional cycle parking would be provided with an improved accessibility when compared to the existing. The scheme would have an acceptable impact on highway safety. In addition, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential properties, would adequately protect protected species and enhance the ecology of the building.

21.6 On balance, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the limited harm created by the roof top plant and screen.

21.7 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 66(1) and section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for approval.

22. Recommendation

22.1 **Approve** subject to:

-The planning conditions as set out below with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

23. Planning Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice.

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, a Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan (DCEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

It shall include/ adhere to the following:

- a) A phasing and co-ordination programme, relative to other Civic Quarter works
- b) Contractor's parking and access arrangements for vehicles, plant and personnel including the location of construction traffic routes to and from the site, their signing, monitoring and enforcement measures.

- c) Control of dust, mud and debris on the highway.
- d) Construction and demolition (except for loading and unloading) shall be carried out only between 0800 hours to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, and 0800 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless in accordance with agreed emergency procedures for deviation.
- e) Delivery hours for muck away, demolition and construction purposes. The hours submitted for approval shall include an assessment of the daily number and type of vehicles required and an assessment as to how vehicles would safely access / exit the site include tracking / swept path analysis. The submission should include a highway safety audit / assessment to support the proposed times and include provision for banks person(s). The delivery times shall be carried out only within the agreed hours and shall at no time should any deliveries take place after 1300 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority in advance.
- f) Prior notice and agreement procedures for works outside agreed limits and hours.
- i) Site artificial lighting during construction and demolition including hours of operation, position and impact on neighbouring properties.
- j) Screening and hoarding details.
- k) Consideration of sensitive receptors.
- l) A Community Liaison Plan to inform the community in respect of:
 - the construction required to facilitate the development
 - contractor point of contact, complaints procedures, including complaints response procedures
- m) Membership of the Considerate Contractor's Scheme.

The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed plan.

Reason: To safeguard the safety, health and quality of life of existing residential occupiers and users of the City centre in accordance with policies 35, 36 and 56 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

4. No works, including preparatory works, shall commence on site until a traffic management plan has been agreed in writing with the Planning Authority. The principal areas of concern that should be addressed are:
 - i. Movements and control of muck away lorries
 - ii. Contractor parking

- iii. Movements and control of all deliveries
- iv. Control of dust, mud and debris, please note it is an offence under the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or debris onto the adopted public highway.

Reason: in the interests of highway safety in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

- 5. No development, other than demolition and enabling/ utility diversion works shall take place until a detailed scheme for the approved rainwater harvesting and recycling strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include relevant drawings showing the location of the necessary infrastructure required to facilitate the water reuse. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To respond to the serious water stress facing the area and ensure that development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

- 6. Prior to the mechanical services equipment / plant and associated acoustic screening on the roof as approved being installed, the details / specifications of all plant / equipment selection (to include operational sound power noise data) and the acoustic solid screening (screen / partial enclosure - to include confirmation of height / length and acoustic performance / sound reduction index - Rw), all as referenced in the submitted 'Cambridge Guildhall: Noise Impact Assessment - P01, 17th September 2025', by Max Fordham LLP (MFLLP) Acoustics Team shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing.

The details and specifications shall demonstrate compliance in accordance with the assumptions / recommendations and operational noise levels within the said Max Fordham LLP (MFLLP) Acoustics Team report.

The details / specifications as approved shall be installed and retained / maintained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby properties (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 - Policy 35: Protection of human health and quality of life from noise and vibration).

7. No development shall take place above ground level, other than demolition, until details of the external materials to be used in the construction of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development does not detract from the character and appearance of the area. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55, 58 and 61).

8. Prior to the commencement of the fourth floor extension, details of the solar PV panels and support frames shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development does not detract from the character and appearance of the area. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55, 58 and 61).

9. Prior to the commencement of the fourth floor extension, details of the safety restraint system for safe working at height shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development does not detract from the character and appearance of the area. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55, 58 and 61).

10. Prior to the installation of the plant screen, full details of the roof top plant screen shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the listed building and conservation area and to be in accordance with Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

11. The building shall not be occupied until the approved sustainability strategy, including energy, carbon and water efficiency, as set out in the Sustainability Statement, Max Fordham, Issue 02 27th October

2025 and Energy and Carbon Reduction Statement, Max Fordham, 27 October 2025 Revision P01 has been implemented in full. Any associated renewable and/or low carbon technology shall thereafter be retained and remain fully operational in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of reducing carbon emissions and to make efficient use of water (Cambridge Local Plan policy 28 and Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

12. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, or as soon as reasonably practicable after occupation, evidence in the form of the BREEAM Wat01 water efficiency calculator shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such evidence shall demonstrate the achievement of no less than 5 Wat01 credits. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained strictly in accordance with the agreed details set out within the BREEAM Wat01 water efficiency calculator.

Reason: To respond to the serious water stress facing the area and ensure that development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020)

13. Prior to first occupation a comprehensive water metering and monitoring system shall be commissioned and installed within the building to quantify at least daily: the total volume of mains water used, the total volume of greywater reclaimed, and the total volume of rainwater used. No occupation shall occur until such time as the local planning authority has been notified through an independent verification report that the water metering and monitoring system has been installed and is fully functional. The metering and monitoring system shall be retained in a fully functioning operational use at all times and for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction in accordance with Policy 28 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018, the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020, the Written Ministerial Statement on Addressing water scarcity in Greater Cambridge: update on government measures (March 2024) Joint Ministerial Statement on addressing Water Scarcity in Greater Cambridge.

14. No development above ground level shall take place until an ecological enhancement scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of bat and bird box installation, and other ecological enhancements. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation or in accordance with a timescale agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To conserve and enhance ecological interests in accordance with Cambridge Local Plan policies 57, 59 and 70 and the Greater Cambridge Planning Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022).

15. No construction of the biodiverse (green) roof(s) shall commence until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- a. The means of access for maintenance
 - b. Plans and sections showing the make-up of the sub-base to be used which may vary in depth from between 80-150mm
 - c. Planting/seeding with an agreed mix of species (the seed mix shall be focused on wildflower planting indigenous to the local area and shall contain no more than a maximum of 25% sedum)
 - d. Where solar panels are proposed, biosolar roofs should be incorporated under and in-between the panels. An array layout will be required incorporating a minimum of 0.75m between rows of panels for access and to ensure establishment of vegetation
 - e. A management/maintenance plan for the roof(s)

The roof(s) shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with the approved details and planting/seeding shall be carried out within the first planting season following the practical completion of the roof. The roof(s) shall be maintained as such in accordance with the approved management/maintenance plan.

The roof(s) shall not be used as an amenity or sitting out space of any kind whatsoever and shall only be used in the case of essential maintenance/repair or escape in case of emergency.

Reason: To ensure the development provides the maximum possible provision towards water management and the creation of habitats and valuable areas for biodiversity. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 31).

16. Prior to the occupation of the development, the ecological mitigation shall be carried out in full in accordance with the details contained in Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Version 2.0 dated 23 October 2025 by MKA Ecology and the Preliminary Roost Assessment Version 2.0 dated 28 October 2025 by MKA Ecology. The ecological measures shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To conserve and enhance ecological interests. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018, policy 57, 59 and 70)

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that asbestos-containing materials are most likely to be present within the fabric of the building. As such, the provisions of the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012, as regulated by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), will apply. The granting of planning permission does not override any obligation arising from this or other legislation relating to the disturbance of asbestos. Further guidance is available from the HSE <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l143.htm>
2. It is recommended that the applicant seek a Public Building Exception to gain specific consent for the existing doors that open outwards over the public highway to regularise them.
3. A premises licence may be required for this or parts of this development (Small and Large Halls) in addition to any planning permission. A premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 may be required to authorise:

The applicant is advised to contact The Licensing Team, Environmental Health & Public Safety, Communities at Cambridge City Council on telephone number (01223) 457890 or email licensing@cambridge.gov.uk for further information / advice etc.

4. As the premises / approved use is intended to be run as or includes a food type business, the applicant is reminded that under the Food

Safety Act 1990 (as amended) the premises / use will need to register with Cambridge City Council, as required by law. The applicant is advised to contact the Commercial Team, Environmental Health & Public Safety, Communities at Cambridge City Council on telephone number (01223) 457890 or email commercial@cambridge.gov.uk for further information / advice etc.